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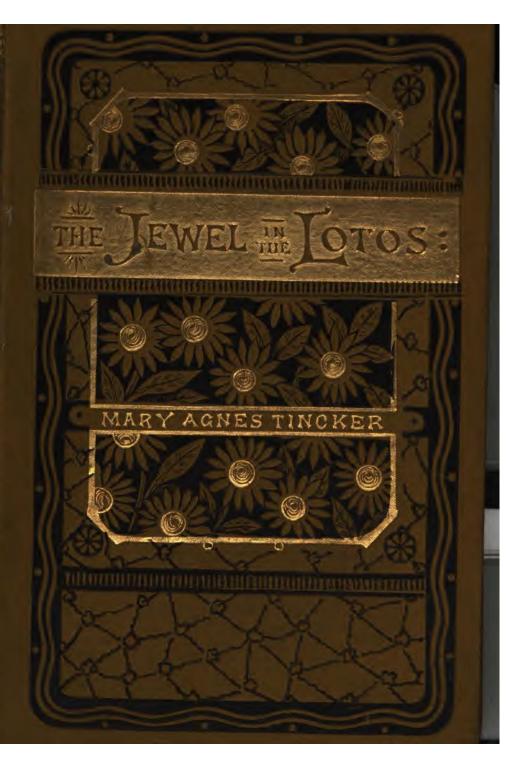
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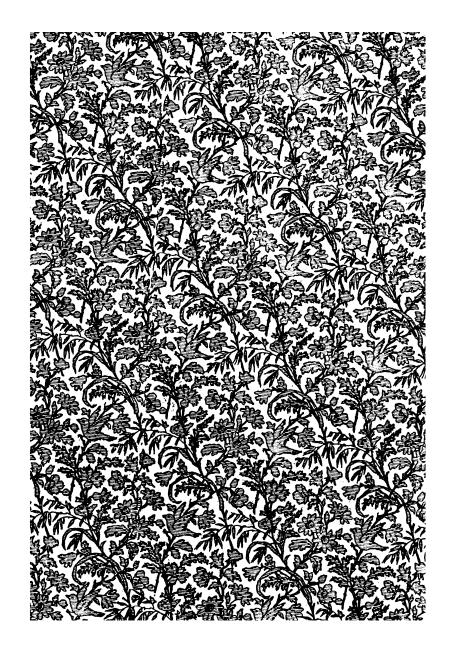
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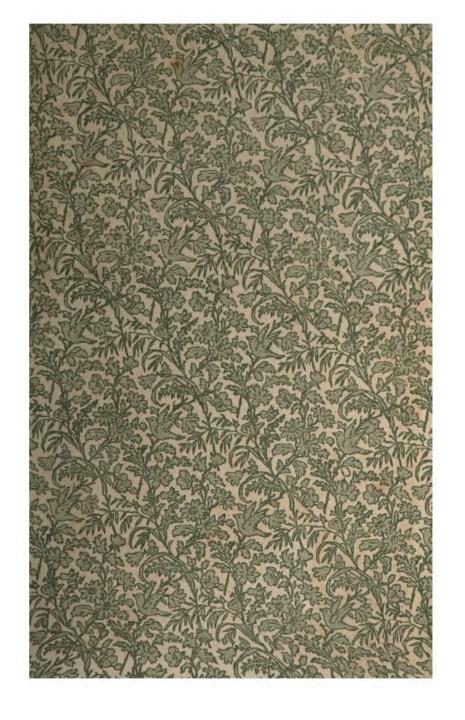
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"Aurora turned and flung her arms wide, north and south, to all the ight horizon."

Puge 79.

JEWEL IN THE LOTOS.

A NOVEL.

BY

MARY AGNES TINCKER,

AUTHOR OF "SIGNOR MONALDINI'S NIECE," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

THOMAS AND HELEN C. HOVENDEN.

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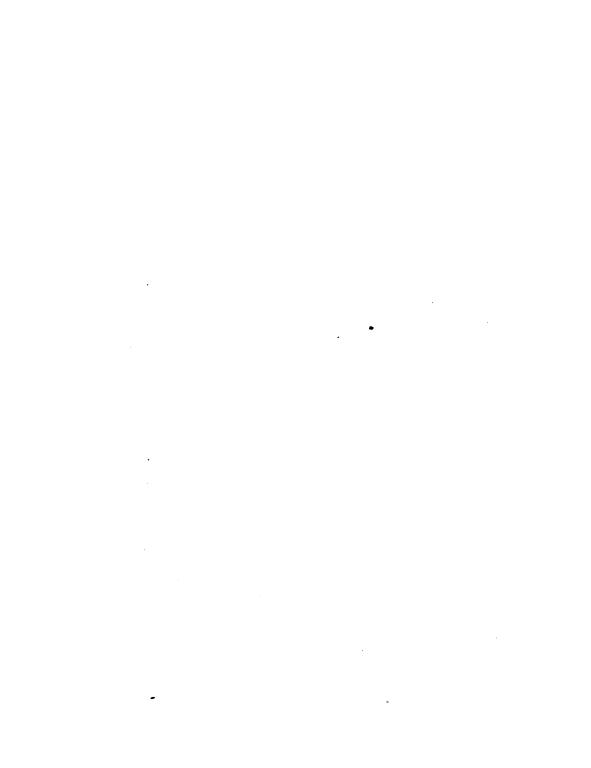
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THE JEWEL IN THE LOTOS.

CHAPTER I.

AURORA.

THE glorious darkness of a Southern night hung over the Apennines,—a night of stars and shadows. Viewed from above, the landscape was like a vast chalice, so deep was the obscurity that prevailed between the heights; while far above the mountain-rim stood clear against the sky. Darker shades in the darkness showed that forests were everywhere, and a silvery pallor here and there told where the mists lay sleeping on the bosom of the valley.

It was midsummer, and the night was full of odors, and a soft sound of waters tinkling like little bells where the mountain-streams ran downward to the plain; for the mountains were fringed about like Aaron's robe,—a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. At intervals a bird sang as though it spoke, and another bird answered,—two liquid voices full of sweetness and of melancholy.

There was nowhere either sight or sound of human kind, except low down on a mountain-side northward of the valley, where a red light had burned all through the night. It came from an eastern window of a house set apart on a rock at the edge of the town of Sassovivo. The window stood wide open, and only a thin white curtain veiled the chamber within; but nothing could have looked through that casement but the stars and the circling rocky peaks, for the house was turned away from the town, and the long road, the Serpentino, that led downward and wound around the mountain-base, lay far beneath the rocks on which the town was built.

Shadows passed across the curtain from time to time. The nightingales might have known, as they sat complaining on flowery boughs

without, that those shadows spoke of fear and haste, and that one lay there in the pangs of mortal suffering who had sung sweeter songs than their soft throats had ever warbled; and, listening, they might have heard a cry that followed their song through the silence, "Oh, my own nightingales!" tremble faintly through the casement.

Within, a bed was drawn into the centre of a large chamber, and the young mother of an unborn infant lay white and faint among the pillows, while two women hung anxiously over her and listened to her breathing. One was her maid, Chiara; the other was Battista, the midwife. The invalid was the Countess Emilia Coronari.

She had suffered from sundown, till Battista, terrified, had sent for the surgeon, the only one in that small place, and had learned, to her still greater terror, that he had gone to a neighboring town to pass the night and would not return till late in the morning. From time to time in the intervals of that anxious watching the woman crept softly to the half-open door of a corridor having a southern window, and relieved her excited feelings by shaking her fist in the direction where the surgeon had gone, sending her anger after him in a whisper which might have scorched his ears: "Brutto brigante! Thou goest to visit strangers, and leavest thine own to die! Che il diavolo ti porti!" Then, composing herself, she returned to the bed with a face all tenderness, and a voice softer than the first sigh of the south wind.

The other woman was more stolid, and had less feeling of responsibility to disturb her. She sat and stared, anxious and affectionate, but sleepy.

And, meanwhile, the midnight was passed, and they were moving toward another day.

There came a sigh from the pillows, and both women started. The invalid opened her eyes and glanced about her.

- "How are you, bella mia?" asked Battista tenderly.
- "I have slept. I am a little restored," replied the lady in a soft, faint voice.

She glanced at the window, and saw that a pallid light from without weakened the reflection of the lamp on the curtain.

"Draw back the curtain and put out the lamp," she said, "and then lie down to rest, both of you: you must be weary and sleepy."

They obeyed her. The brass lamp was extinguished, leaving the

room in darkness, save for the tiny flame floating in olive oil before a picture of Santa Maria del Parto, and the dim lustre from the eastern sky. They drew back the curtain, and left the casement quite free, with a delicate coolness stealing in. Then Battista lay down on a wide sofa in the room, and Chiara threw herself on the bed in her own little chamber near by. In five minutes both were sound asleep. They were the only persons in the house, these three.

The lady lay and looked out through the casement. A sense of utter weakness had conquered her fears, and her spirit seemed to float, cold and calm, upon silent heights while she watched the coming in of another day over the earth, and contemplated the hovering visions of life and death which alternately presented themselves to her mind. Not many hours had passed since her heart was in a tempest of passion with the thought of her ruined hopes, of the husband of a few months whom she had left in disgust never to see again, and of the desolation of meeting her trial with only servants about her. Now she felt as dead to passion as if her soul had risen from the warm currents of her human blood and sailed upward into the cool, thin ether. Through that crystalline medium she looked calmly at the past and the present, nor cared to stir with a single prayerful breath the close-hung curtain of the future.

Sweet, innocent pictures of her childhood rose and passed. They were to her as the tuning of a harp before singing. The early triumphs of the girl-poetess, when she had been caressed in many a gilded salon, and old men had listened, smiling, to her verses, waved her perfumed laurels before her unresponsive sense. Fond and foolish love-passages stole into view, whispering of a time when she had believed each soul born on the earth to be but the broken half of a perfect sphere, and that he who found his mate among these lower shades should be a star; and moments of anguish, that, when they passed, were as sharp as sword-blades, started out in her memory of those days when first she knew that she had wedded darkness and not light; yet neither the one nor the other had power to melt one snow-flake of her coldness or wake a ripple on the calmness of her spirit. She saw and judged them all. They were a tuning of the chords. What melody was to follow? she asked, yet did not listen for an answer, but only waited.

Slowly the thin white light stole up among the stars. How many

a time she had watched from that casement while the great constellations passed by, and singled out their fairest jewels to make bright her songs, and searched the earth-stained horizon for the first dancing beams, red, blue, and silver, of that favorite of the nations, the Cynosure, the lord of summer heat, the Stella Matutina of the people, Sirius, the splendid!

"He made the stars also," she murmured, as they grew fainter at the coming of light, the first-born; and, lifted up, her soul seemed to sparkle as the frost sparkles, and she adored the One who makes and unmakes; the multiform, the inevitable; who breathes through the violet and flames through the thunderbolt; who is moonlight and starlight, and morning and evening, and all days; who dwells in thick darkness; who waits, but swerves not; who laughs to scorn the scorner, and mocks at resistance; the hater of lies, and the lover of courage; who crowns the brow that is uplifted to him, and leads the doubter in a dark labyrinth; who is Osiris and Brahma, Prometheus and Jove, the Fire-God of the Parsee and the Jewel in the Lotos; who turns creation in his hand as an hour-glass; who looks on the rainbow and remembers.

Her thoughts floated about him as snow-flakes float about the hemispheres, and floating fell, and falling melted.

"I know Thou wilt not lose me," she whispered: "I am but little more than a sparrow; but Thou wilt not lose me!"

The mountain-outlines grew sharp against the brightening east, and all between that band of dusky orange and the violet zenith was a gleaming silver.

"Yesterday the sun rose on the northern side of that tallest peak," said the poetess. "To-day 'twill rise just on the peak itself; and by to-morrow morning—Ah! shall I live to see it burning through that splinter at the south, and touching the last bough of my tall pomegranate with its earliest ray? To-day the flowering almond will catch the first."

A faint tremor crept into her whispering voice, and the dark, brilliant eyes grew tearful.

"I wish that we might both live or both die," she said. "I would have my child with me whether I stay or go."

A radiance grew around the tingling height. The mists were

bleached to silver as they floated slowly upward, sleeping yet. The air was full of the songs of birds innumerable. Human life awoke.

"O heavenly Father, let us both live!"

The prayer of awakening passion was borne outward on a cry of pain; the spirit, half exhaled, dropped back into the starting blood, and the struggle for life recommenced.

The day grew to a steadfast glory, and when its first ray shot over the mountain-peak into the chamber, Battista, radiant with delight, and holding a bundle in her arms, leaned over the bed.

- "Signora contessa mia," she said, "it is a lovely little girl!"
- " Una bella femmina!" repeated the maid in an ecstasy.

The mother lifted her drooping lids and smiled, all heaven in her soul. "A girl!" she whispered. "Then her name is Aurora."

Battista gave the babe to its mother, then went out into the southern corridor and shook her fist toward a distant paese white against the sun.

"Eh! eh!" she cackled with triumphant mocking, "Signor chirurgo mio! Eh! eh!"

CHAPTER II.

SASSOVIVO.

THE town of Sassovivo is built around the sides of a low mountain of the same name, the houses fitted in between ledges that push themselves out abruptly here and there,—built chiefly on the southern side, where there are fewer rocks. The principal highway descends on the eastern side between two of these ledges, curls around the base of the mountain, and moves off westward in search of Rome. This is the Serpentino; and its first turn is underneath the Countess Emilia's windows. Other narrow roads and paths wriggle down as best they may in hidden crevices, unsavory for the most part. You were best to take the highway, where half the width of an old Roman road paved with large flat stones serves as a sidewalk. The other half lies under five feet of earth and a rich growth of flowering trees.

Northward from the town rises the great Monte Roccioso, a stern gray giant that holds the smaller heights between its feet and shields it from all the cold winds, the maestro, tramontana, and greco, and sends down through its fissures bright cool streams of crystalline water.

An isthmus of verdant land connects the two mountains, forming a beautiful plateau even with the town, but separated from it by almost impassable rocks. This plateau is rough at the eastern extremity, but slopes smoothly to the western plain. On this isthmus is the villa of the feudal family of Sassovivo, the Dukes Cagliostro. Seen from the west, their lovely domain seemed to sit between the arms of an immense throne, down from which the vines and olives swept like a garment and spread themselves into the plain. Through the midst of this sunny verdure a broad ilex avenue drew its smooth undulations of deep shade, and joined the Serpentino in the plain, and went off with it in search of Rome.

The ancient citadel of the Cagliostri had been on the summit of Monte Sassovivo, and there still remained the ruins of a square tower with one wall lifted and holding up an arched window. This fragment of masonry, with its open arch, was called the Cornice by the people on the plateau; and many a bright sky-picture it framed. Now the sun looked through, and now the moon, and now it was the "paved work of a sapphire" fit for a heavenly vision to stand upon. In winter, when the sun hung low in the south, the shadow of this ruin travelled across the isthmus, till at noon it touched the central window of the palace, and at sunset faded off the eastern rock on which stood Casa Coronari. In summer the dusky gnomon with its heart of light only crept along the edge of the bright gardens of the Cagliostri.

A slender line of broken stones that had once been a wall ran down the mountain from the old citadel to a high rock on the western border of the town; and here stood yet the remains of an old castle, with its dark, frowning walls lifted against the sunset.

Almost sixty years before, a Scotch painter had begged permission to make an apartment for himself among the uninhabited ruins of this old castle. Permission had readily been given, for he was a gentleman, and about to be married to the daughter of a man who stood well with the ducal family. The Cavaliere Lirici was well born, and, though poor, had always maintained a certain dignity in the town;

and his wife and her beautiful blonde daughter went frequently to the palace when the family was there. Moreover, the rambling cats and children who frequented the place were more picturesque than profitable, and the artist paid regularly a small but sufficient rent. He took a lease so long as to make the ruins almost his own, and made it a condition that if they should ever be taken from him or his heirs without their consent they should be paid the full sum for all the improvements made. The duke, on his part, consented to the conditions for himself and his successor. While the rebuilding was in progress, the Scotchman bought certain narrow and arid terraces on the cliff-side below the castle, turned the broccoli and cabbages that grew there heads down for guano, had earth brought from the plain below and a thread of a stream from the hill above, and planted a choice little vigna and orchard in the warm crevices of the living rock that pushed its crimson white-streaked masses out and gave the mountain a name. Steps in the rock so steep and narrow as to be mere stone ladders led from terrace to terrace. The last one stopped with its rough parapet on a level with the upper branches of the duke's olive-trees, that stood below in a multitude dull with their weight of honey-colored oil, dreaming of glittering tables and crystal bottles set in silver, and of dim incense-perfumed churches where they should illumine the gold and silver lamps with lambent flames and see what saints and angels did at night in the wide aisles and in the dusky splendor of the painted arches and around the jewelled shrines.

The people stared wide-mouthed at the making of these terraces with earth brought from where nature had laid it to where man would have it. They would as soon have thought of robbing their shoulders to make round their cheeks. And they stared when they saw how stately chambers grew into perfection among those desolate walls, and comfort and beauty made its home within them. And, lastly, they stared once more, for they were shut out forever from the old castle where all their lives they had hitherto wandered at their will.

Four years the painter and his bride lived there, as happy as the sun. A boy was born to them in the first year. Then the young mother died; and after a short time the father took his child, shut up the house, and went to Rome. A brother artist came to occupy the apartment till the master could bear to return to it.

He never could bear to return and live the prose of life where once its poetry had been. He took his child to England and put him to school there. When the boy was eight years old he brought him to see his birthplace, but left the new wife in Rome while they made this little pilgrimage. And still he kept his hold of the place, and sent occasional tenants to it. The vigne were renewed at his order, the house repaired.

Years passed, and once again he came, an old man now, and stayed there alone one silent autumn month, and took a final leave of his sweetest home. But before going he renewed the lease for his son with the young duke, and permitted the duke's administrator to live in the place, occupying half the rooms rent-free for the care of the whole. And he presented the young duchess with the fruit of his well-kept vigna for her own table, and begged her to have a smile for his boy Angelo if ever he should come there. And he was sure to come some day, he said.

And then he kissed the lady's hand, and went away forever. His name was Donald Glenlyon.

CHAPTER III.

AURELIA.

Two years before this Italian mother brought forth her child in triumph and named it for the morning light, an English mother had died that her child might live, and, seeing with her fading eyes the sunny silken down on her little one's head, had named her Aurelia.

That unconscious head thus crowned at its birth with a golden name and an irreparable grief had yet another loss in store to make its sorrow perfect. Death entered again the English home on the same day that saw new life a guest in the Italian one. The father followed the mother, and the golden head was an orphan.

This father, Mr. Winfield, had lived since his widowhood in a city of villas and gardens that in this July weather were in their greatest glory. He was a strict, even stern, member of the Church of Eng-

land, so grave in demeanor that strangers usually took him to be a clergyman. He was highly respected by all who knew him, though scarcely popular. He had married late in life, congratulating himself on having found at last the perfect Christian lady whom he had so long and vainly sought. And scarcely had he found her when he lost her. But little more than two years had passed when he was called to follow her.

His wife had no near relatives, and he had none to whom he was willing to intrust the child. His sickness was sudden and short, and the thought of her made death seem terrible to him. He had meant her to be such a perfect creature, had taken such pains with her early training. Already he could see that her character had begun to take form, and that she had received ineffaceable impressions. She was calculated to receive such impressions. There was something of the father's rock foundation underneath the little curls and dimples.

Who would carry out what he had begun, and save the girl from a life of vanity? The only friend she had was her nurse and his faithful housekeeper, Mrs. Gowan. Half he resolved to leave the child with her. And then, just before it was too late, a light broke in, and all his fears took flight.

He recollected a man who at college had been one of his heroes, and whose subsequent life he had followed with an admiration which was ardent, if sometimes unwilling. In all his knowledge of men, no other had given him an example of a kindness so tender, an integrity so firm, and a courage so undaunted.

This man, the son of a Scotch painter who might have been famous but that sudden wealth had changed him from an artist to a dilettante, and of an Italian girl who had left him motherless almost in his infancy, had led a notable and exceptional life. He was a philanthropist whose sole prayer had seemed to be,—

Write me as one who loves his fellow-men.

He had been worshipped and abused, as such men must be. By the few whose esteem was of value, he was revered; and he was loved devotedly in many silent, scattered lives which knew not of each other.

The dying man knew that his old friend was anything but orthodox, though he had said little or nothing of religions: he knew it by his

silence more than by his speech. On the other hand, if he had any prejudice in favor of any mode of worship, might it not be for the faith of his Italian mother? Yet not for that did the father hesitate. Few people are perfectly orthodox at the hour of death. When that cry, "Lazarus, come forth!" is heard by the soul, the bands that have held it begin to loosen.

He dictated a letter, and Mrs. Gowan wrote it. He spoke of hours which they had passed together in their youth, of marks of affection which each had received from the other, and of differences which had tested, without destroying, their mutual esteem. And then he added, "I am dying, and I leave a little motherless girl to the mercy of the world."

When the letter was written, he signed it with his own hand, that was already cold, the signature slanting down the page and so nearly illegible that the housekeeper had added his name beneath in her own hand.

It had not been necessary for him to ask any guardianship for his Well he knew the nobleness of that heart, and that even from a stranger such an appeal would not have been disregarded. a peaceful assurance that Glenlyon would not refuse to come to him. Had he not responded to every cry of grief that ever came to him, with a word of sympathy and encouragement, at least, if he could give no more? Had wrong ever been done in his own land or in others but his voice had been raised to denounce it? Had he not spent his life and his substance for the unfortunate, wherever they might be found? Had he not beat upon his own heart as upon a fiery anvil till the flying sparks had kindled conflagrations where no fuel had seemed to exist? Had he not been pitiful to street-waifs, to fallen women, to discharged convicts, to outcasts of every sort, and yet, withal, a lover of order? Had he not guarded jealously the rights of the stranger? and was he not the champion of the silent?

Oh, Glenlyon would surely come!

Though with his human eyes he might not see him coming, his spirit, if such power were permitted, would see that faithful Christian respond to his call.

For, whatever doubts this stern churchman might have had of the man to whom he appealed in the hour of his need, he knew him for a Christian. By his works he knew him.

When the child was brought to receive her father's last blessing, a little, gray-eyed, laughing creature, and he felt with a new vividness how helpless she was, and what a white soul was there to make the world more fair or for the world to soil, he knew that a strong and generous friend had been raised up for her.

Glenlyon would come!

She sat on his bed, her bright hair shining about her head and neck, her eyes dilating with wonder and even something of fear. She held up her toys, and her steady gaze seemed to ask if that were indeed her father who looked so white and who did not smile on her.

"Let in the sun," he said. And they opened the curtains to the light that illuminated all the dusky room.

The child smiled and looked at her father.

He spoke, laying his cold hand on her head: "May the God of the fatherless bless thee, my child! May he be pitiful to thy youth and tenderness, and keep thee in the right way all the days of thy life! May Christ Jesus forever bless thee, my fatherless child!"

She sat there, silent and steadfastly gazing, the sunlight shining over them both. And then, even in that brightness, even her infant eyes saw a shadow in her father's face as he passed into the valley of the shadow of death.

"He is coming," they heard him whisper, as they stood weeping around his bed; and they thought that he meant Christ Jesus.

He meant Glenlyon.

The Lord had come already.

CHAPTER IV.

LOST AND FOUND.

GLENLYON came. He came up from London by night, and reached the gate of the park where his friend lived at early morning. The gate was not yet open. Only the families living within went out by this gate: the servants passed by another way. The porter looked through the window of his ivy-wreathed cottage at the summons. It was not an imperative one, and therefore he did not respect it. He could not know that its gentleness was from awe in the presence of death.

He saw a tall and rather dusty gentleman standing outside,—a very tall gentleman, with gray threads in his full dark hair and long beard. His eyes were of a pale blue, and looked out from a depth; his strong yet regular features were serious, even solemn. There was something in his air which made the porter change his first intention not to hurry himself. He went out, and touched his hat involuntarily as he waited, standing in the door-way.

"Open the gate," said the stranger.

The porter obeyed without asking any questions, and his impression of the stranger's consequence was increased when Glenlyon passed him by as if unconscious of his being and walked along the wide avenue, where half a score of blooming villas stood facing the park, with their backs to the high wall on the north.

He looked anxiously at each one as he passed. The windows all stood open, and there were servants in sight, sweeping, dusting, or talking with each other from garden to garden, or gathering flowers for the vases. Surely there was no sorrow behind any of these fluttering curtains.

The trees half hid the last of this row of houses. When he came near, he saw that, though the door stood open, the shutters were all closed, and there was no one in sight. A thin wreath of smoke rose straight into the morning air: there was no other sign of life.

Reaching the gate, Glenlyon uttered a low exclamation, and stopped. There was a crape scarf tied to the bell-handle. He rested his arms on the gate and dropped his face to them. All the words of sympathy and reassurance that he would have uttered had come too late. He could only stand there and water the threshold of the dead with his regretful tears.

Presently a step came down from the door, and he raised his head. A man-servant came out to him.

"He sent for me," said Glenlyon; "and I am come too late."

"Yes, sir; he went yesterday. He said that you were sure to come. Will you come in, sir?"

The visitor hesitated. His disappointment was so sharp that he

did not wish to face at once a new pain. "Am I needed for anything now?" he asked.

"I think not, sir. Mrs. Gowan has given all the necessary orders, and some gentlemen and the sexton have arranged for the funeral this afternoon. But you will want some breakfast and to rest. Your room is ready for you."

Glenlyon turned away: "Not now. I will walk about the park for an hour before coming in."

With a slow and heavy step, and his head bowed down, he walked along the avenue toward the eastern gate. The sun shone on a few tears fallen in his beard. His heart was pierced by that cry which he had been too late to answer. But, as he thought, the words came back and soothed him, "He said that you were sure to come." "He did not need to see me, then," he thought, and took comfort.

The park in which he walked was a private one, the common property of a few householders whose pretty villas were built, each in its own garden, around the borders. All the centre and south of the park were slopes of velvet green, with groves, and lightly-shaded avenues, and single trees that spread wide and high their lordly branches. The city stood close to the walls, but nothing disturbed the sylvan quiet of the spot. Tree-tops, with a few spires and roofs among them, and a low, undulating horizon of green hills, were visible over the walls.

The scene was fair and peaceful.

Glenlyon turned backward and went into the house of death.

The day passed. People came and went softly, and in the afternoon there was a funeral.

When all was over, Glenlyon went back to the house to give his last directions before returning to London. Mrs. Gowan was to follow him with the child the next day. He had assumed the guardianship of the little one without having seen her. Some kind neighbor had taken her home to play with her own children that day.

The door stood open. He entered, but met no one. The whole house was still. The servants were having their dinner in a distant room, and had not expected him so soon. He did not know where to find them, and shrank from breaking that silence with the sound of a bell. He hesitated a moment, then went up-stairs into the chamber

where the dead had lain. All the windows were open now to the light breeze, the room was despoiled of half its furniture, the bed-clothes were taken away, and the mattress lay bare, without even a pillow.

As Glenlyon reached the threshold, he saw a child standing in the middle of the room. She had been looking at the bed, but turned her wide eyes quickly to the door at sound of his step, a frightened hope starting out of them, and as quickly fading away at sight of a stranger. Her under lip was pushed out and quivering, and her soft gray eyes stood full of tears as they turned back to the empty bed again. Her tumbled frock and hair showed that she had been sleeping; and through an open door was visible in another room a child's bed, with the print of a small form in it and the dent made by a little head in the pillow. A tiny shoe hung by its strap to one ankle, the other was on the foot.

Glenlyon looked at this child, not yet three years old, as she stood there alone confronting an immeasurable grief, and his heart swelled. Men and women have a wider vision, and in their utmost anguish they can see a misty ring of hope or consolation shining round their love's eclipse; but this infant, crushed and uncomprehending, saw but an empty bed. Those tears through which she looked were to her heart the universal deluge.

"Poor little dear!" said Glenlyon, taking a step nearer. "Do you want your papa?"

She looked at him again, and her breath came in quick pants, and the suspended tears trembled with fulness.

"Do you want your papa?" he repeated softly.

Down rolled the tears over her cheeks, up came the sobs out of her throat. "Papa! papa!" she cried, looking wildly around.

He held his arms out to her. "Come and let us search for him," he said.

She was too much absorbed in her grief to hesitate. He took her up, and, with many a softly-murmured word, carried her down-stairs. He looked into one room after another, to keep her heart up. He carried her out into the garden,—"Let us see if he is here,"—and called her attention to bird and cloud and passer-by, to win her thoughts away from grief, if but for an instant. He showed all the little arts

of a woman in consoling and distracting, and was as much absorbed and in earnest as though he were soothing the woes of a people.

The time for the train by which he was to have returned to London came and passed, and he gave it no thought. He was sending a servant to buy toys and sweets for the child, was playing the piano for her, was opening his watch for her to see the works, and he left her only when she had sobbed herself to sleep.

He took her and her nurse to London with him the next morning; and again she was his occupation. He carried her up and down the great city, watching eagerly for the smile that half waked at some new sight; and when it died away again, and the lip began to tremble and the eyes to wander, they started up once more and went on in search of papa.

Days and weeks went by, and this tall gentleman with the grand, serious face, and the golden-haired fairy with tears in her eyes, became a familiar sight in certain pleasant quarters of the town, wandering up and down in rain and shine. They sought the lost father in bright parks where far-off gardens shone like rainbows through the clustering trees; in museums they followed him from room to room, behind great tables of antique vases, and among the stuffed beasts whose terrors were less terrible than grief; they sought him in picture-galleries, in music-halls, in crowded streets, in carriages, in railway trains, among a thousand lovely and exciting distractions.

Sometimes committees waited, and dinners and correspondents were neglected, and men with important affairs to talk about were put aside, while Glenlyon and his little ward went tirelessly wandering about on their piteous search.

Little by little the sobs grew still, and the tears more rare, and the smiles more frequent; and at length the search was ended, for the child had found a father.

And then, when she was consoled, he told her gently of the father who had gone to heaven, where one day she would find him; and from his story her childish imagination built up an image of wide blue wings behind which one who loved her waited, watching over her by night with starry eyes. She was in no haste to go to him, for she had found the face of love; and it was to her as her father's face.

· Glenlyon was a childless widower. He had married early in life,

and had not married well. His wife had become an invalid, and all their children had died in infancy. For fifteen years he had watched over her, bearing her complaints with patient kindness, and at length had laid her to rest with deep sighs in which was somewhat of relief as well as sorrow. Since then he had lived alone in a pleasant old London house, never leaving town except on business.

In the pleasantest chamber of this house he established his young ward; and when she was old enough, he gave her a governess and masters; and he overlooked all her studies. When she became a young maiden, and he felt that she had need of the society of women, he sought out his half-estranged relatives and begged them to be kind to her. His father's second wife was a Scotch lady, who had never half approved of the courses of her step-son; and when she became a widow she returned with her two daughters to Scotland, and left him to do as he would. There had been no quarrel; they had merely drifted apart. She was dead, and her daughters married, long before he took this child. They exchanged ceremonious greetings at certain seasons, and then forgot each other. But he knew that they were proud, exclusive, but pure-souled women, and he desired no better friends for the girl.

She grew to a fair maidenhood under the tutelage which they readily accorded. Her talents were graceful, if not brilliant, her beauty a soft captivating sort which grew upon the beholder and fascinated him before he was aware. Perhaps among her greatest fascinations was one which many young girls entirely lose sight of, or do not dream can be a charm,—her perfect obedience to the authority of her guardian and of the persons who represented him. She left a pleasant company or refused an alluring acquaintance at their request with a smile on her pretty mouth and an up-look of confidence and affection into their faces which was irresistible. It made the task of protecting her a proud one; for her manner reflected honor on her guardians as well as on herself. One naturally thought, on witnessing one of these little scenes, How agreeable must be that person for whom she so readily resigns all other company! how delightful that home to which she so smilingly turns from every scene of gayety!

Nor did this sweet submission bear any sign of weakness or lack of character. It was rather the manner of one who walks for the first time in a way which others know well, and who has perfect confidence in her guide. She never hesitated in the most worldly company to give duty as the motive for her actions; and she made right-doing more fascinating in the eyes of those who gave such motives little thought than they had ever believed it could be.

The first impression she produced, and, for many, the sole one, was of softness and gentleness. Her wavy hair, now a pale brown with sunny reflections, her dove-like gray eyes, the delicate infantine pallor of her face, the pink lips, the dimple that came and went with her slight, frequent smile, the simple dresses of modest make and color, the pale blue ribbons that she wore so much,—these made an ensemble which suggested all that was most gentle. But a reader of faces might have seen signs of strength of will in the mouth and chin, and in the fair, straight brows; one whom she had been counselled to repel would have found that her eyes were cold and her face capable of assuming a marble immobility; and her voice, though low and well trained, was not soft in tone, but had a certain clear, hard quality. It was a voice which would be harsh if raised in anger; but it never had been, and probably never would be, raised in anger. making any talk on the subject, she avoided all vulgarity. garded good taste as a virtue, and virtue as good taste. Whatever society had decided upon as proper she did quietly, but without servility; whatever her father's religion bade her do as a duty she did with smiling readiness. Some stern principles, inherited, it may be, from her father and strengthened by her guardian, might have drawn the reproach of prudery on most girls; but they invested her with a higher value and delicacy. She would not waltz, but she declined with a dimpling smile which robbed refusal of its harshness; and many a gentleman who swung about more brilliant beauties and left them indifferently would have felt his heart beat high with pride and delight if he could have hoped to lay his hand for a few brief moments on that slender waist.

It was a case of *jeunesse savait*. In short, the good stars had met in the horoscope of a passionless nature and made it nearly faultless. A petted only or eldest child is already put in good nature with the world; and good nature and the habit of pleasing are a battle half won.

Mrs. Kinlock, Glenlyon's younger step-sister, had but one daughter, married to the Hon. Mr. Woodford, attaché of the English embassy at Vienna. Mrs. Kinlock, therefore, was free to give much of her time to Aurelia, and was glad of her charming company during their visits to the country. She had already given the girl some respectable, but not very brilliant, society. Glenlyon resolutely set his face against a London season.

His elder step-sister had married a Scotch laird, and was too much occupied with her six sons and three daughters to think much of any other person's sons and daughters. It just crossed her prudent mind, however, that one of her youngest sons would do extremely well to marry Glenlyon's ward and possible heiress.

Mrs. Kinlock had trained her charge in her father's religion, and had warned her with sufficient plainness against imbibing any extravagant ideas from her guardian.

"My brother is a man of great talent and force of character," the lady said. "He is a very superior person, and can therefore say and do what would not become us to echo. We should only be ridiculed for what in him is admired."

"My guardian never wished me to make myself conspicuous or singular," Aurelia replied calmly. "He has always been pleased that I should do as others do."

She told the truth. Glenlyon had learned that it requires an exceptional strength and force of character to sustain an exceptional position undaunted and untroubled, and that one who has stepped outside of the ranks must feel that lofty indifference to the host of critics, small, and sometimes even respectable, which is harder to learn than scorn,—which is, indeed, the philosophy that survives when scorn has ceased to be a passion.

He certainly had no wish that his ward should be other than the charming girl she was.

CHAPTER V.

THREESCORE AND TEN, AND FIVE.

At the wide drawing-room window of a pleasant old London house in a pleasant London square, the deep-hued smoky sunshine of a summer morning was waiting for admittance. The shutters were open, but a straight linen curtain in brown and amber stripes still covered the panes, not drawn so closely, however, but that a single ray entered at one corner and struck a gilt handle of a large cabinet of ebony and brass that stood beside the window. This small spark rebounded to a candlestick, and from thence to a mirror, which flung it to a sofa-cushion. It sunk there in a spot of deep red, and went no farther.

This bright little visitor, without illuminating the room, made it visible. It was a large chamber, occupying the whole house-front, and communicated by folding doors, now shut, with another room at the back of the house.

The front room, originally a drawing-room, had gradually assumed the appearance of a study. A large writing-table was drawn near the window, and an arm-chair stood before it. There were several cases of books on the walls, and the black-and-gold cabinet was full of pigeon-holes for papers. A stronger light would have revealed that the furniture was well worn, though scrupulously kept. The colors of the velvet draperies had been maroon, and the carpet a mass of shadowy ferns with pomegranate-blossoms in bunches, and threads of gold-color had run through the tassels and fringes; but now all had settled into a general tone of reddish brown, with deep, soft shadows. It was the background of an old portrait, without the figure.

A door opened from the passage, and a trim house-maid entered, bearing a tray on which a frugal breakfast was exquisitely arranged. She placed it on the writing-table before the arm-chair, glanced about to see that all was in order, wiped a speck of dust off the chair-back with her apron, and tripped away, at the sound of the door-bell, with a self-satisfied look on her pretty face.

In a moment she returned with a handful of papers and letters, laid them beside the tray, and tripped away again. She had scarcely gone, when the door opened a third time, but less briskly now, and the old background received its figure. It was an old man of imposing height and presence, with heaped-up snowy hair and a long white beard. Pale-blue eyes, slightly dimmed by time, looked forth from under heavy brows with an expression of calm thoughtfulness and unconscious melancholy. It would be hard to say why strangers sometimes guessed that he was Scotch before knowing that he was. His niece the attaché's wife called him the Scotch Jove.

No one, certainly, guessed that Italian blood flowed in his veins, though men had sometimes seen his passion sweep everything before it. It was no hidden fire of the blood that blazed out then and startled those who had heard only his judicial and somewhat ponderous speech; nor was it an egotistical rage which moved him. The first spark that entered his heart lighted his eyes; and when attack or opposition touched him personally, he seldom answered. His fire had quite another source. Souls such as his are the earthly stations of heavenly judgment, and when they denounce a wrong it is the anger of the Lord which flashes through them, and their speech is an echo of the thunders of Sinai.

"My mother was Italian, and gave me her own name," he would say on the rare occasions when his Christian name excited comment, and, saying so, he would remain silent a moment, considering, almost as if the fact were new to himself, or had been long forgotten and was recalled with some surprise.

In fact, his birth and that far-away home under the sun were to him a sort of myth and mystery, and he thought of them as in the old time some hero might have thought upon his birth when told that his mother was a nymph. He had learned and kept his mother's language; he was careful of his speech, and even of his thought, on all Italian things, guarding a tender chivalry for the fair mother-country; but of sympathy he had as yet felt nothing.

This gentleman closed the door behind him, paused a moment, then came forward and drew up the curtain, letting in the slanting sunshine. He had never asked his own reason for directing the servant to leave the curtain for him to raise. She thought that it was to

spare for a few minutes the further fading of the faded hangings,—a servant's interpretation. Perhaps the instinct of letting light into darkness, of making all things better than he found them, working at the foundations of his life, had been at the root of this fancy.

He glanced out into the square, stood in the sun an instant, then seated himself, and began to eat his breakfast. His slowness and hesitation came neither from weakness nor from doubt, but were the result of a habit of abstraction.

His breakfast ended, and the tray taken away by the prompt and silent handmaiden, he drew his mail toward him and sorted it with deliberate care,—the papers to wait, the letters to receive immediate attention. One of them, a delicate letter with a fanciful seal,—plainly a young lady's letter,—was laid aside on the pile of journals. The others he read. Some were briefly answered, and some destroyed. After writing a few words on the backs of those he kept, he rose and placed them in the old cabinet beside the window, each in its place.

Then he returned to his arm-chair, like one who has performed a task, took the remaining letter and turned it over with a tender interest, glancing at the light and graceful penmanship, the delicate cream tint, and the pretty seal; then, leaning back, he opened it carefully, and unfolded the closely-written sheet with a look of pleasant expectation.

Twice a week unfailingly these letters came to him from his absent ward, who was passing a summer month or two at Tunbridge Wells with Mrs. Kinlock. As he opened this one, a slender black cord with a tiny gold ring on it dropped out.

He read:

"MY DEAR GUARDIAN: You are sure not to remember that the day on which this will reach you, the 18th of July, is your seventy-fifth birthday. But I have not forgotten it; and neither have I forgotten that by this time your eye-glasses will need a new cord. The cord is a matter of course, but the ring is my little present for your birthday. I had it made on the model of one worn by a gentleman here. He says that it makes the cord less likely to pull on the glasses. I have noticed that sometimes, when you move quickly, your glasses get a pull that seems to annoy your eyes."

The writer went on to describe her life and tell all its little incidents. Then he read:

"Mrs. Kinlock has just received a letter from Lady McLellan, who writes that Robert is coming here for a few days. You know I have never seen him. He was at college when I went to Scotland.

"Cannot you come too, my dear guardian, if only for a few days? I cannot but feel that you are sometimes a little lonely, though you have such thoughts to occupy you; and I am sure that the air of this place would do you good, even if you do not drink the waters. Mrs. Kinlock says that it is the finest air she ever breathed. There is a wacant room in the house which some people have just left, and I have begged the family to keep it till I hear from you. Robert will not lodge with us."

He read the letter through, but was scarcely conscious of the meaning of the last lines, the first had taken such a hold on him. Seventy-five years of age to-day! He had not thought that he was so old.

Not but that he had known it in a certain way, and said a hundred times that he was an old man. Not but that he had paused at certain periods and felt with a momentary shock that they were important periods in his life. At fifty, he had stood and looked back on his youth, quite detached from him, and floating, a visionary figure, in the past. "Hail and farewell!" he said then, and took up his work again without a sigh. He who thinks only of the harvest does not regret the passing of the spring and summer months. At seventy the awakening had been more solemn, the pause longer. He had remembered that the life of man is threescore years and ten, and that all the years beyond are a special grace. And yet again, his tribute paid of reverent thought, he had taken up his life with courage and with hope, seeing a future still. "I am strong, healthy, and active, and there is work yet to do," he said.

But seventy-five! He seemed to have heard a bell toll.

He laid the letter down, substituted the cord with its little split ring for the one he wore, in which there was a knot too many, and began to read the papers.

There were rumors of wars, in which torrents of innocent blood might be spilt in the name of justice, and tens of thousands of innocent homes made desolate in the name of charity. There were records of diplomatic fencing: here and there a noble word was spoken, to which at any other time he would have made haste to utter an amen: there was a sound as of low, desolate winds where the sighs of oppressed ones gathered themselves together, breathing all one way, and his impulse would have been to raise the cry of "Let the people go!" without waiting for another voice to join him; for he had ever said, with an eloquent brother across the sea, "One, with God, is a majority."

The news of all the world was there before him; but it beat upon his mind like nerveless hands upon a broken tambour. There was no resonance.

He laid the last paper down, and sat looking at it vacantly a moment. Then he rose, and began to pace slowly to and fro. He opened the folding doors, passed into the second room, and threw back one of the shutters there. The light broke in and showed a gay little drawing-room with feminine trinkets scattered about. It was the room that he had prepared for and given up to his ward when first she put on long dresses and called herself a young lady. He glanced about as if in search of something, or as if he had not seen the place well before. Then he closed the shutter, returned to the study, and shut the door again, drawing it even and carefully.

And then he did a strange thing: he stopped before the wide mirror over the mantel-piece and looked steadfastly at his reflection there. He had seen it a thousand times; but now he looked for something deeper than a superficial image. He sought to make his consciousness of himself a companion in the awful solitude which opened out before him. He sought to see himself as from without, and inform his own judgment with the estimates of others. He looked with a solemnity that was almost terror at this patriarch with the snowy hair. Why, was it longer ago than yesterday that those locks were brown? and but an hour before his hands had been full of work, and a long life of plans! A chill crept into his heart and out to his fingers' ends. One's self is sometimes awful company.

And, yet, when he turned away from the mirror he began to grow conscious of a long weariness. It seemed to him that at times some distaste had touched him momentarily, unnoticed, save in an abstracted,

unrecognizing way, some veiled thought passed through his mind, ghost-like, to be forgotten in a breath. He had given his whole strength,—now with a steadfast firmness, now with a leonine fire, but ever his whole strength. Less than all would have seemed to him too little, would have been contrary to his nature to give. He owned now to himself that he was weary. Had he found this weariness in the letter? or had the letter found it in him?

He was like the husbandman who, laboring the whole day in the field, is presently aware that a shadow has fallen all about him, and, looking up, sees that the sun is gone, and the stars are shining out above, and then first knows that he is tired.

Seventy-five years old. Yet some men are good for work at ninety; and he was still strong.

He was not one of those who keep their birthdays and count their gray hairs and their creeping pains. He ever forgot himself; and now himself had fallen on him like a mountain.

He looked out with a sort of passion. His heart cried out for children to gather about him, to-warm his coldness, to toss their laughters round him like the waters of a fountain, till his rough age should glisten with a brightness caught from them,—for children to bless, and to charge that they should carry on the work that he must soon let fall,—children who would not let him die altogether, who would strengthen his hands when he should go down to meet the enemy at the gate of death. Ah! more blessed, he said, are dying hands on the heads of clustering children than living hands that are stretched out to emptiness!

An hour passed by as he walked to and fro. He went to the table again, and, taking up Aurelia's letter, read it through once more. He might as well have tried to warm himself at moonlight. He thought of her. He had no fears for her, no anxieties. She was sure to walk carefully and securely through life, to have always about her an approving circle. She would marry a man of perfect respectability, have well-trained children, and die in peace. He was glad that her life promised to be, and was, so prosperous, for her sake and for her father's,—for his own, too, since he had assumed the care of her. And, saying that he was glad, he sighed, and laid the letter down.

And then he sighed again, this time with the impatience of a man

who casts aside a thought he will no longer entertain, and stood up and rung his bell.

- "I am going down to see Miss Winfield," he said to the maid. "Prepare my valise for a few days, and call a cab for the noon train."
 - "Yes, sir. Will you eat something before going?"
- "No. Send my papers and letters to me as soon as they arrive, till I telegraph you not to. Do not leave the house alone a moment."
 - "No, sir."
 - "And, Jenny-"

The girl looked at her master with obedient attention.

- "You have been a very good, faithful girl. When I come back, you shall go away for a little visit. Here is a sovereign for you."
 - "Thank ye, sir!"

The manner was prompt and proper; but there was astonishment beneath it. When had the master spoken to her before, except to give his orders? He had not seemed aware of her; and now his voice trembled with kindness, and there were tears in his eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

RELATIVES.

THERE had been a croquet-party in Calverly Park, and some persons had been invited in from outside. They had had tea under a patriarchal elm-tree, and afterward the young people went wandering about the green, and through the paths that at this hour could still be private; for, though the public could not be excluded from the avenue when the gates were open, low fences still shut in the larger part of the grounds. Pretty groups dotted the bright turf,—young girls in their soft rose, white, blue, and many-tinted garments, making far more artistic combinations of color than were to be seen in the hard splendors of ribbon-bordering in the gardens beyond the avenues, which at a distance looked like strips of painted wood. The voices and laughter of these girls were scarce louder than the murmur of a breeze through the foliage, and in their lovely braided hair one found the sunshine that was missing in their skies.

The table had been carried away, but some chairs were left under the trees, and two ladies sat there talking. One was a plain, elderly woman,—Mrs. Kinlock. She was rather dowdy in dress, but had a pleasant face. The other was a grand-niece of the Glenlyons,—Mrs. Armandale. She had married a distant relative of the Duke of Omnium, and had just returned from a visit to the duchess, who had also presented her. She was rather pretty, had an air of conscious elegance and beatitude, and was a good sort of person, though rather frothy.

Near the two, and listening to their talk, were a young man and a young woman. The girl had wavy blond hair drawn back into a bunch of curls, a delicately fair skin, and a pretty figure. She wore a gray muslin dress with blue ribbons. Her companion, whose eyes frequently turned to her and rested as long as they dared, was a handsome youth, fresh-colored and a little freckled, with clear blue eyes and decidedly auburn hair. He wore his gray tweed suit with a certain grace, and held a straw hat in his hand. This was Robert McLellan, sixth son of the Earl of Earncliff.

Mrs. Armandale was speaking: "Her Grace takes chocolate every morning in bed; and she frequently sent for me to come and talk with her awhile before she dressed. It was delightful. Nothing could be lovelier than her Grace's manners. She has been so much in courts and in continental society that she has selected the elegances of all the world."

"Is not the duchess rather original in her toilets?" the young lad \mathcal{I} asked. "I have heard that she invents them herself."

Mrs. Armandale gave a glance of quiet appreciation over the gray muslin dress, from the uttermost hem of it up to the wearer's face. "I should question the taste of any one who would criticise the Duchess of Omnium's toilets," she said coldly. "It could not have been any one who has been admitted to her Grace's society."

Aurelia blushed under the rebuke, and still more at the sudden thought that her dress, instead of being simply modest, as she had meant it to be, was probably dowdy. But she smiled through her blush. "I am sure that you are an authority, Mrs. Armandale," she said. "Your own toilets are always exquisite."

The young man was perhaps a little too enthusiastic in ascribing

this reply and the manner of it to unmixed saintliness. There may have been a grain of worldly prudence in it. He interposed: "Aunt, will you allow Miss Winfield to go and walk with me? She refuses to go without your consent. We have been waiting for the Duchess of Omnium to drink her chocolate."

- "I am sorry to have detained you. Pray excuse me," said Mrs. Armandale with elaborate politeness.
- "I wanted to hear. I was so much interested!" Aurelia made haste to say.

Mrs. Kinlock nodded smilingly, and the two young people strolled away down a narrow path that obliged them to walk quite close together.

- "Elizabeth Armandale is a fool, you know," Mr. McLellan said confidentially. "To hear her talk, one would think that she was a suddenly-promoted lady's-maid. At home we call her our Graceful cousin. She's the tallest sort of a snob."
- "Oh, Mr. McLellan!" said Aurelia chidingly, but with no very crushing severity.
- "She is, though," he persisted. He had deeply resented that depreciating glance at the gray muslin. "If she were a poor man, she'd want to be a tall footman. She's like the fellow in the play—what is it?—who was going to have clothes with 'buttons all over 'em.'"
 - "Mrs. Armandale is very pretty," remarked Aurelia.
 - "Not half so pretty as—some other people," returned her companion.
- "Not so pretty as dear Lady Grizel," said Aurelia with enthusiasm. "She has the most beautiful hair I ever saw,—such a rich, shadowed gold!"
- "Pretty hair for a girl," the young man admitted in a careless way, glancing up into the branches over their heads, but holding his breath while awaiting her reply. His sister Grizel's hair was precisely the same color as his own.
- "It is pretty for any one," Aurelia declared, with an air of conviction. "It is a coronet in itself."

A quick smile flashed across her companion's face. "I was sorry not to be at home when you came to Earncliff," he said. "The family enjoyed your visit so much. The girls are always quoting you; and my mother holds you up to them as a model."

- "Oh, they are my models," Aurelia exclaimed. "I shall never forget how very kind they all were to me. They taught me a great deal. I have never known young ladies so industrious and so accomplished."
- "You must come again, but not when I am away," said Mr. Robert.
 - "I might not know that you were away. I did not know it then."
- "I could write and let you know when I am going to be at home," he said impulsively.
- "I am afraid that would hardly do. You would not expect me to come to see you."
- "Of course. How stupid I am! But there is no reason why I should not write to you, if you are willing. We are a sort of cousins, you know. Besides, I think that it would be the proper thing for us to call each other Aurelia and Robert. I shall put the question to my aunt this evening. Aurelia is the sweetest name I ever heard."
- "My mother gave me the name when she was dying," the girl said, with a sweet seriousness.

There was silence for a moment. They had walked down into a hollow, and were now ascending a gentle rise, both pretending not to be aware that in changing their path they avoided meeting some of the company who would have interrupted their conversation. One of the small private gates opened just before them as they went up, and a gentleman came through.

"Let's go across the green," said the young man hastily. "Hel-vellyn is going to fall upon us. I never meet a man of that size if I can help it. I am but twenty-three, you know, and have not yet got my growth; and they have a certain way of looking down upon one which is humiliating. In ten years or so—"

He broke off; for Aurelia, uttering a joyful "My dear guardian!" quitted his side and ran to meet Glenlyon. He saw the old man take her in his arms and kiss her. Then the two came toward him. For an instant he felt as if Helvellyn had indeed fallen upon him. "If there's a blunder in the lot, I'm sure to draw it!" he muttered.

But the two approaching faces reassured him. Aurelia, hanging on her guardian's arm and gazing up into his face as she talked, had yet a smiling glance to spare him: she seemed, indeed, to be speaking of him, and his uncle looked at him kindly. He took heart and went to meet them.

Aurelia left her guardian's arm, and Glenlyon extended his hand cordially to his nephew. "I do not know how it is that I have not seen you since you were a boy," he said; "but I am glad to see you now." And the eyes that glanced over the young man's form and face expressed pleasure and approval.

- "You were occupied with more important objects than raw schoolboys, sir," McLellan said, walking beside them. "But I have seen you more than once in these years, and, if I had not felt my insignificance too much, would have made myself known to you."
- "There were those to whom I could be of some service, perhaps," said Glenlyon. "You did not need me, Robert."
- "At all events, I am glad to have met you at last, sir; and I hope that in the future you will believe I need you all you will allow me to."

There was something very pleasant in the young man's frank, respectful address, and he walked beside his uncle with uncovered head.

Aurelia looked across at him with beaming eyes. She was not that unfortunate female usually described as "clinging;" her delicate touch never lost its value, and her smiles and glances were never cloying; but she was prodigal of her sweetness now for five minutes, and gave the two gentlemen a brief season of unexpected felicity.

Mrs. Kinlock and her niece had risen at their approach, and came forward to meet Glenlyon.

- "It would be interesting, not to say historical, to know what has brought you out of London," his step-sister said. "If the motive be a person, that person ought to be proud."
- "I was moved as the hour-glass is,—by a good many little things," he said, taking the chair that Mrs. Armandale gracefully offered him. "The last grain was Aurelia's last letter. I am here as her guest."

She stood beside him, smiling with an expression of affectionate pride.

"I also come to celebrate my seventy-fifth birthday," he added cheerfully. Then, turning to his ward, "The ring is an improvement, and the cord was just in time.—She forgets nothing," he said, glancing at the others. Then to her again, "You were taking a walk with Robert. Go and finish it. I will stay and talk with these ladies,

with their permission.—I had a note from your husband this morning, Elizabeth."

- "If we should wait for you—" Aurelia began.
- "No; I have already spent an hour in walking about the town, and I wish to see Mrs. Armandale. Besides, I like to sit under a tree. Go and finish your walk."
- "I wonder if she will have the courage to talk court twaddle and etiquette to him," the young man said, as they turned away.
- "Etiquette is a useful study," remarked the girl judicially. "The knowledge and practice of it make even a subordinate position dignified. I mean to ask a great many questions of Mrs. Armandale."

Her companion did not seem to be much cast down by her severity. "Of course it is useful," he said. "And grammar is useful, too. How would you like to hear me conjugate verbs for a conversation? I love, thou lovest—"

- "I shouldn't like it at all," she interrupted hastily.
- · "What a fine fellow my uncle is!" he said. "I always had a temptation to follow in his tracks. My family were afraid that I would, and were all down upon me,—three sisters and mother, five brothers and father. That makes four women and six men,—a good many tongues to have against you in your own house. I should like to be such a man as he is."

Aurelia looked dignified. "I do not think that 'fellow' is the proper term for any one to use in speaking of my guardian," she said, "and especially for a near relative to use. And it would not be easy to be such a man as he is." She was decidedly of opinion that one philanthropist and reformer was enough in the family.

McLellan blushed and laughed at once. "That's my careless way of speaking," he said. "I own it isn't the proper term. Don't be angry with me. As to being like him—I suppose all other men look to you like pygmies beside him."

"Of course most men seem inferior in comparison," she replied hesitatingly.

They walked on a little way in silence. Coming presently to a clover-bank, McLellan bent over it and began to search among the leaves. "I once found a five-leaved clover on this spot," he said.

His companion stood and smiled indulgently on him while he

searched, but did not herself look. He found the leaf presently, and gave it to her. "I want you to keep this and to make me a promise," he said.

- " What is it?"
- "Promise me that when you see a man whom you like as well as you do my uncle, or better, you will send me that leaf back."
- "But I shall never see him," she replied, standing with the leaf in her hand and looking down at it.
- "Oh, yes, you will. Or you will imagine that you do. I am quite in earnest. I am—curious to know what gort of man will please you."
- "I promise, then," she said slowly; and, taking a tiny tablet from her pocket, she put the leaf in it. "But perhaps I shall not know where you are."
 - "You can always know, if you will," he replied, with growing ardor.
- "Well, I will send it on that condition. But the condition can never be fulfilled." She looked back while speaking. "But, see," she added hastily, "Mrs. Kinlock and Mrs. Armandale are gone home, and he is waiting for us. Come."

They walked back almost in silence over the bright grass from which the sunset light had but just lifted itself into the trees. Glenlyon looked at them attentively as they approached him. Eighteen years had passed since his first and last visit to this place, and then he had taken away a weeping infant. Now she came smiling toward him, a fair, good, happy girl; and there was a young man by her side whose devotion was not hard to understand. It seemed to Glenlyon that he had done well by her. He thought with contentment that here was one work of his life of which he saw the successful accomplishment. And at the same time he thought also that perhaps there was no more for him to do here. Well, the pain of it was slight. If she had no need of him, she would at least never be glad to get rid of him.

She also, in her way, remembered his former visit. She came to his side, touched his shoulder with one hand, and silently pointed with the other to the villa nearest them.

"Yes," he said.

She bent and kissed his white hair, with tears in her soft eyes. They remained so a few minutes without saying a word, both looking at the house wherein she had lost both father and mother and found a friend who had replaced them both.

Then Glenlyon rose. "Your aunt tells me, Robert, that you dine with her while you are here," he said. "I think it is time for us to go."

They walked slowly homeward, out of the Park, through Church Road, and across the Common to the street above, where Mrs. Kinlock had taken lodgings.

Glenlyon asked his nephew about his future career.

"Oh, my family and I have not yet agreed about that. sir," he said, with a faint sigh. "I hope to bring them round; but at present they seem to have booked me for the Church. John and Duncan have all the army patronage we can count on, and Douglas the diplomatic. They are all three well on. Churchill says that he is going to raise cattle in Colorado. I offered to change with him, but he said—well, sir, I'm afraid that what he said was rather rough."

"What did he say?" inquired Glenlyon, with a faint smile.

Robert glanced across his uncle's beard at the face over the blue breast-knot. It was looking downward, and seemed on the point of becoming severe.

"Oh, no great harm," he answered, "only Churchill said that the collies could take care of sheep, but cattle needed a man to look after them."

Aurelia's face became severe; her eyes remained fixed on the ground.

- "Don't allow yourself to get in the habit of sneering about religious subjects, Robert," his uncle said, with kind seriousness. "It isn't gentlemanly; and, what is more, it isn't right."
- "I never meant to sneer at religion, nor did Churchill," was the hasty disclaimer.
- "And tell your brother for me," Glenlyon continued, "that it requires more courage and manliness to preach and act the truth always than it does to fight lions. The martyrdoms of to-day are not so violent and conspicuous, nor are they so inspiring, as those of old; but for that very reason they are harder to bear. Satan found that his old mode of warfare aroused enthusiasm and weakened his cause, and he has changed his tactics. He smiles, and sneers, and whispers down the truth, and pricks it to death with pins. He has changed from a roaring lion back to a serpent again."

"I'm afraid very few people believe in Satan nowadays," the young man observed.

"If they fought him they would feel him," said Glenlyon.

McLellan was blushing. He had a trick of blushing. But his uncle's gravity was equalled by his gentleness, and the nephew's heart was touched. "I will remember what you say, sir," he said, and for a moment forgot to look and see if Aurelia were propitiated.

They were at the gate of their lodgings, and Mrs. Armandale stood in the door to receive her uncle, as she called Glenlyon.

- "Are you angry with me?" Robert asked, in a hasty whisper, as Aurelia passed him.
- "You must remember what your uncle has said to you," she replied evasively, but with a friendly glance.

Their lodgings were in a quiet, orderly house overlooking the Common and the town. The air was pure and fresh, the whole apartment full of the mild light of that misty clime. There was something that was at once soothing and cheerful in the place and the company.

- "If it were not for these dreadful joints, I should be charmed with everything," Mrs. Armandale declared, as they sat at dinner. "I dread the roast. It is literally a bone of contention between my aunt and me."
- "I stand by the joint," Mrs. Kinlock said. "I think that a part of our national prosperity and manliness depends upon it. Minced meat goes with minced morals."
- "But I do not wish to be manly," her niece sighed, looking pathetically at a brown precipice of roast beef that loomed before her.

Robert and Aurelia sat together opposite Mrs. Kinlock. "Theregoes the war of the points of the compass!" he said to her.

Mrs. Kinlock overheard him. "I hope, brother," she said to Glenlyon, "that you will give us your aid in trying to break Robert of some unpatriotic habits of thought which he is falling into. I like to see a Briton think well of his country."

"And ill of every other," added her nephew.

Glenlyon glanced seriously at the young man from under his heavy brows. "Am I to understand that Robert does not prefer his own country to others?" he asked. "He can explain himself," Mrs. Kinlock replied. "I suppose he likes to tease me."

McLellan was cutting bread for Aurelia; for Mrs. Kinlock's loaves were as unfailing as her joints. He finished his smooth division of a milk-white slice before replying:

"My aunt assisted, not long ago, at a little discussion I had with His argument was that the star of empire, travelling westward, remains and will remain in the West. I argued that, like any other star, it goes in a circle, and may, in some later century, shine in the West is a relative term. America is our West, and the East again. With the settlement of California and its old Orient is their West. commerce with Japan and China the circle became complete. was the West stuck in the mud, if you will allow me. The ancient people of the New World went backward against the sun, and they The Americans have opened the Golden Gate to a new died out. revolution of our star of empire. The Chinese are mingling with them, going against the sun,—the first step toward extinction, or at least subjection."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Kinlock, unable to keep silence, "do you mean to say that the Americans are going to conquer India?"

"I mean that light is going to conquer it," McLellan replied. "When that time comes, who knows what changes may have occurred?"

A singular change had passed over Glenlyon's face while listening. He became fixed for an instant, his brows raised, his eyes gazing through the window, and far away. Those eyes, widening and brightening, seemed to behold a great light. "Could it be in Jerusalem!" he muttered. Then, recalled by the sound of his own voice, he dropped his glance again. "I see no lack of patriotism in Robert," he said. "He only seems to believe that nations are not immortal; and history has already taught us that."

"But doubting them is no way to preserve them," Mrs. Kinlock persisted. "I think that self-respect in a nation or a person is the surest road to the respect of others; and that self-respect is impossible where one dwells upon inevitable defects and possible failure."

Glenlyon bowed a tranquil acquiescence. "It is true that to a second-class self-respect some conceit is necessary," he said.

"And what, then, is first-class self-respect?" his step-sister asked, looking at him with surprise.

"Reliance on God," he replied.

Mrs. Kinlock was a religious woman. She was silent a moment, then said, in a subdued voice, "You have taken a higher ground than I did, brother."

But the thought crossed her mind that both Glenlyon and Robert were rather unpractical. What would become of society if people trusted in God alone and did not keep their powder dry? "That poor Glenlyon!" she thought; "he would be capable of marching up to the Red Sea and expecting it to stand up in two walls beside a dry path for him to pass through."

"Apropos of the Chinese," Mrs. Armandale said, "her Grace has invited the Chinese ambassador to Omnium." And the talk came to the surface again.

It was a pleasant company, and this was the beginning of several pleasant days for Glenlyon. He spent the most of his time with the family, and entered into all their little pleasures and interests. the first time in his life, he watched and studied those trifles which go to make up so many lives, and tried to find some value in them. He did find a value in them. They were like the fine stippling which makes the delicate lights and shades of a face; like the little unnoticed details which finish an heroic picture and make its strength seem stronger; like the wild weeds and flowers clothing with a grace soft and minute the landscape's bold and sweeping lines. Great forces shape the earth, but its fair colors come from nothings. They signified little, these things he watched, but the little they did signify was necessary to a perfect whole. He looked with a sort of wonder mingled with admiration at these women who were content to go on so from day to day and from year to year. If it had been a waiting for some grand thing to be accomplished in the future, their patience would have been sublime; but there was no air of waiting or of expectation. It seemed almost fruition to them. He could but think that their idea of heaven would be much the same life with some impediments that now exist removed forever. It was true that their conduct revealed many amiable qualities and some virtues. They were charitable—within certain limits. Beyond those limits they were not, perhaps, uncharitable: they did not reach at all. Their charity was the shining of a small lamp whose radiance made a spot of light upon a field of shadow. Well, if all should make their little circle of light, the world would be brighter. They were amiable to each other, and to those about them, exercising, when necessary, those little forbearances without which no harmony can exist; but he could not be sure that either would be capable of forgiving a wrong. They were honorable ladies. They did not lie, nor steal, nor rejoice in sander, as so many ladies do. They were pure; their impulses were kind; they did not hate any one, they merely disapproved. They were not extravagant, they were orderly, and they were prudent. Not for the sake of saving a soul would they have stepped out of the well-drilled ranks to which they belonged. If, lacking their help, the soul should be lost, they would sincerely deplore its loss as an inscrutable dispensation of Providence.

He recognized their excellences; but at length the contemplation of them made him feel cramped. It was changing his view from the telescope to the microscope. He began to regret his dim London drawing-room.

If but the spring would come back to his nerves, and the old martial music sound again! He read papers and letters, and talked of affairs with his nephew, but no echo woke in him as of old. He liked to talk with Robert, and saw an important reason for knowing him well. The Countess of Earncliff and Mrs. Kinlock both wished that he should marry Aurelia, and it was evident that the young man was more than willing; and, though her guardian saw in her no sign of other than a friendly liking, it behooved him to know well the person who might one day ask him for his ward.

The result of his observation was pleasant. Robert was a ma honest fellow, with a certain sweet charm of manner which cover much of latent reserve and firmness. A closer acquaintance with showed that his frankness did not tell all, and that there were deeper feelings which were too sensitive to reveal themselves.

Robert remained with them but a few days, being expected home, and in that short time he won his uncle's confidence and affection "If only you could persuade him to make up his mind to the Church!" Mrs. Kinlock said, the last day they were together. "H.

could have such a career there as he can scarcely hope for anywhere olse."

She was alone with Robert and her step-brother in a sort of supplementary family council.

"I doubt the wisdom of doing too much to influence a young man in the choice of a career," Glenlyon said. "Nature has something to say in the matter. Besides, I do not know what Robert's feelings and wishes are."

"I am not fitted for the Church, sir, and I do not believe in forcing a vocation. I might get through my duty in a dry way, but I should never love it, and I should not make people respect and admire the profession in me. I believe that no good work is done which is not done joyfully, especially when the work is a moral one. Besides—"

"Oh, you have said enough," his aunt interrupted hastily. "Arguments are always unprofitable. I was only thinking of persuasion."

"I think it right to tell my uncle what I really wish to do," the young man said, looking steadily at his aunt, whose movement he understood. "I wish to be a painter, sir. I am sure that I have talent. And if I have a passion in life, it is for painting."

Mrs. Kinlock flashed a quick glance in her step-brother's face. What could she say against the boy being a painter before one whose father was a painter?

Glenlyon's face was impassive. "I do not think that I have any right to interfere," he said. "Robert has a father and mother to advise him. But, if I had the right even, I have not the ability. It seems to me that after a young man's friends have expressed their wishes and their arguments in favor of a certain course for him they should leave the decision to himself, and not torment him with teasing. There are few mistakes more objectionable than that of one person trying to dispose of the life of another. If it were a question of disposing of his fortune, everybody would cry out against it. Yet life is more than fortune."

Mrs. Kinlock sighed, and leaned back in her chair.

"It is not a caprice with me, sir," the young man said earnestly. "I wish to please my family when I can. I am very sorry and uncomfortable about their opposition. But this is too strong for me. If I were a rector, I should have a studio in my attic and let my wife

manage the parish. I should be sure to do it. Why, I cannot look at a face that pleases me without thinking how I may paint it."

"Think of his being a portrait-painter!" ejaculated Mrs. Kinlock faintly,—addressing, apparently, the heavenly powers, for her eyes were cast upward.

"Hardly that," the young man replied, with a smile; "though I should like to paint yours and uncle's."

Into the silence that followed stole a clear, low voice singing a song from the garden below. It hummed a few lines of "Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast," then sang out with exquisite emphasis, "I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee!"

Young McLellan reddened with a swift delight, and rose: "May I be excused? I am going to walk with Aurelia, and she is waiting for me."

The two elders glanced at each other and smiled when he left them. "Aurelia could persuade him better than we," Mrs. Kinlock said. "She would make an admirable wife for a clergyman; her tastes are so serious. He would do anything to please her."

Glenlyon's smile faded quickly. "I will not allow it!" he said with decision. "I will not assist in using a man's weakness and the persuasions of the woman he loves to turn him to a course which his conscience does not approve. Robert must make his decision uninfluenced by her."

"I could never understand how a gentleman could wish to be an artist," said Mrs. Kinlock, with a little irritation. "It cannot be an inherited taste in him; for, though our father was a painter when he was young, painting had no great hold on him, or he would not have given it up when he married my mother. If he had painted all his life and become famous, then I should say that Robert inherited his taste."

"I almost believe that my father made a mistake in the choice of his art," Glenlyon said thoughtfully. "He was born in Italy, and every influence thrust painting on him. He showed great talent, certainly; but I think that if he had chosen differently he would have persisted."

"He might have gone into Parliament very young," Mrs. Kinlock remarked hesitatingly.

The battle of the Italian marriage had been fought out when they

here young, and the two sisters had learned early that they were not touch the land of Glenlyon's birth and of his mother's.

"No, my father was a born artist," he said. "Art is the offspring of the creative instinct. He must have made something. I have more than once thought that music suited him; but it was too late when he himself thought of it. He had no musical education, but he was a fine whistler, and he used to improvise unconsciously. A friend of his has told me that he never heard more beautiful or inspiring melodies than my father would whistle at his painting, without seeming aware or remembering a note of them."

Mrs. Kinlock breathed a mute thanksgiving that her father had chosen painting. A British gentleman whistling his own melodies as a profession was certainly several grades below the same gentleman painting Italian girls in short petticoats and with towels on their heads. She could not rid herself of the impression that her father's first wife had been one of these girls, though she knew better.

Nor could she disabuse her mind of a long-fixed idea that Italian women were distinctly divided into two classes,—the short-petticoated, and another composed of Tullias, Lucretia Borgias, Julia Farneses, and Olympia Maldachinis.

On the whole, she preferred the former class.

CHAPTER VII.

RESIGNATION.

Aurelia saw her lover go with a tranquil face, though his was full of pain. It was quite en règle that men should plead and women be obdurate, she thought. And she had been obdurate. For Robert had spoken, prematurely, he confessed, but inevitably.

"How could I see you and not love you?" he said. "And how could I love you and not tell you of it?"

She was not offended with him for telling her: she mentally agreed with him that it was quite natural. He was by no means the first one who had sighed at her feet and been calmly bidden to rise. Aurelia

had none of that excessive sensibility which makes some girls fly from an impending offer of marriage as they would from the cannon's mouth, and weep at the sorrows of a rejected suitor with a grief exceeding, possibly, his own. Still less would she have married a man merely because he loved her. He must love her, indeed; but not for that alone would he win her.

- "Robert has offered himself to me," she said to her guardian, after the young man had left them.
 - "Indeed!" exclaimed Glenlyon. "And you?"
- "It was, of course, very premature," she replied. "I like him, certainly; but that is of no consequence. It is impossible to accept a man whom one has known only four or five days."
- "You have not refused him, Aurelia!" he said almost reproachfully.
- "I have requested him to act just as though the offer had never been made, and have assured him of my friendship. I gave him permission to write me once a month, if you are willing, but to write merely friendly letters. I told him that he was to hope nothing, positively nothing, from this permission, and that if I were to accept some one else after a few months he would have no right to complain."

Glenlyon looked at his ward as she stood by the window where he sat, her expression one of quiet reserve, and no tinge of a blush on her fair face as she told her story. He opened his lips to speak, but closed them without having uttered a word.

- "I hope that you approve of what I have done," she said, after a moment's pause.
- "I approve of your having refused to enter into an engagement so hastily," he replied, with a slight coldness. "It would have been indelicate. I should have been pleased if you had postponed your decision. But perhaps that is the meaning of this correspondence," he added, looking at her keenly. "You cannot expect that he will write you merely friendly letters. To allow him to write is to give him an opportunity to urge his suit, and is for you to become better acquainted with him."
- "I made him understand that I would not be considered as committing myself in the least by the correspondence," she replied firmly. "I consented to it merely because he was unhappy."

"Aurelia," said her guardian with decision, "if you are resolved not to accept Robert, I object to your allowing him to write to you."

"I will, then, write and tell him so; or perhaps you would prefer to write," she said, quietly, but with a faint color in her cheeks and something not unlike displeasure in her tone.

"Do you mean that you will write him a final refusal?"

She hesitated an instant, then said, in a lower voice, "I do not think that I am quite prepared to do that."

Her guardian's face softened. "Then let the arrangement stay as you have made it, my dear," he said kindly. "I only wish you to be careful not to encourage hopes which are to be disappointed in the end. I am afraid that Robert would not have spoken so hastily if he had not fancied that you gave him some encouragement. In the intimacy of our family life it was easy for him to make that mistake. But you know that two or three others have made the same mistake, though they did not blame you."

A light, quick blush fluttered across the girl's face. "I cannot help it if gentlemen find me fascinating," she said, almost haughtily.

"Moths will fly about the flame, I know," her guardian replied, with a faint smile. "When a few more shall have been disappointed, I think that you will have found some way of saving them the mortification of a refusal, if you should still be unable to prevent their being fascinated by you."

Was there a faint, faint mocking in his pleasant tones and in the eyes that were steadily fixed upon her as Glenlyon rose? The blush on her cheeks did not fade, but deepened rather.

"Are you going out? Do you wish for company?" she asked hastily.

No; he would go alone.

Perhaps Glenlyon did not understand how fascinating his ward really was. Nothing stimulates pursuit like that sweetness which seems at once so near, yet inaccessible. She liked to please, and she pleased easily. More than one had had the vanity to think at first sight that she would be easily won, and had begun love-making half in play. But the frost soon chilled their self-conceit, while kindling their passion. That gentle coolness which might, they hoped, show

any moment a small answering spark, was like a breeze that a flame. They would not believe that all their ardor could not her, till at last, weary of gentleness, she dropped upon their illusions a cold and stern refusal.

She could not help it if they found her fascinating; yet, a guardian left her with that faint mocking, she was forced to conference that the sighs of adoring lovers made a music not unpleated her ears.

Glenlyon went out and walked about the pleasant Common, whislopes and curves its bright green acres round the hill, half wild, has cultivated. Then he went back to the upper part and seated himsel on a bench under the tall, dense trees. His mind was groping for decision impossible to settle on his shaking premises.

He looked at the children playing about on the green, and at the people who passed by. Now and then some gentleman would pass with a straightforward gaze and rigid countenance, though there was no one else within rods of them. He was accustomed to these manners, and himself but little likely to address strangers; yet at the moment it seemed to him discourteous and too cold.

"Two Italians would not pass each other so," he thought. "Still less would any Italian pass an old man sitting alone and not salute him. We are not, certainly, a graceful-mannered people."

His thoughts turned away to the land of sunny aqueducts and shadowy immemorial gateways. It was the land of his birth; and as he looked in spirit toward it he was conscious of some faint stirring in his heart, a tender sweetness, a sense of comfort and rest. It was voice as small as that of a thread of water hidden in the hill-side: heard at night only, but it was there. Italian words came up, like flowers when the earth grows warm in spring, and blossomed over him rough English speech.

"La mia patria!" he said, and with unseeing eyes looked far of to the horizon, while his soul saw, hovering like a mirage betwixt it present life and heaven, the sunny shores and purple mountains of his native land. Silent and bright it stood there on his road to heaver and, as he looked, the valley of the shadow seemed a soft twilight set between a rainbow and the morning star.

[&]quot;La mia patria!"

He drew a deep breath and looked once more about him. It was a noble landscape underneath a sky of mottled gray and silver cloudlets spread across the tender blue. The air was bright with an almost imperceptible mist. The land, monotonous at first sight, showed at the second glance a gently-accentuated variety, "as if the hand of God touched, but did not press, in making England." Those great trees were no aspri sterpi in the involved and knotted limbs of which a Dante could find a prison fit for violent suicidal spirits. All was full of a dull, unintrusive vegetable life, a growing up of nebulous consciousness not yet conscious of itself. No English reeds would ever tell the secret whispered to them. Dignified mansions stood somewhat apart in dignified domains, and little villas seemed to be the children of the mansions. It was a sleek and prosperous scene, full of a dull contentment, and he was out of tune with it.

The thought began to glimmer on him that his late activity had been but the momentum of a past impetus. His true work had been when he had worked almost alone. When the objects for which he had striven became party creeds he scarcely knew them any more, and felt but a sober, half-distrustful satisfaction over their successes. They wore another face from that fiery one which had seemed to look at him from between a sweep of wings till he had followed, while men said he chased an *ignis-fatuus*. With a crowd behind his heels then, he had drawn back, and only half rejoiced at that digested manna in the breasts of those who dreamed of flesh-pots and three-times-three hosannahs paid for in place and pounds and pence. He would not follow them. And they had blamed him. They either could not or would not see that one who would be true to God must needs be somewhat polyglot in party creeds.

But the criticisms of men had never moved him. Now that they were past, the only serious thought they gave him was that possibly there might have been some grain of justice in them. No matter how wrong the critics were: had he been always right? He had meant well, had always meant well; but had he never failed in doing? He must go aside, and take breath, and think, ere he should go away forever.

Oh, where were now those caves and solitudes where men could once put off the world and teach their spirits how to walk a little on the borders of the other world, yet steadied by the flesh, like infants by their mothers' hands, lest they should reel with headlong dizziness if that let go too suddenly?

His mind was clear now. He laid aside his life of action with a solemn Amen. The clinging tendrils and curved roots unclasped their hold, and did not bleed. Perhaps there was a moment's faintness. He had been stopped while running.

"I will go home," he said. And by "home" he meant Italy.

That afternoon, when he was alone with Aurelia, Glenlyon told her something of his plans. In a month he would go over to the Continent, cross leisurely, stopping at several places, and spend the winter in his apartment at Sassovivo. Would she like to go with him? or would she prefer to remain in England?

She listened with startled eyes. It was a wild proposal to come from him, who had grown old in London, and a fairy-like one to come to her. "Oh, don't leave me behind!" she exclaimed. "Of course I couldn't think of your going alone."

"Certainly you shall go if you wish," he said. "Only I thought that you might not care to leave England. Don't decide too hastily. We will go to Paris, and there you can decide whether to return or go on. The place in Italy might be dull for you. It is not a great city, you know, but only a little town."

"Oh, that makes no difference," she protested. "My place is your side wherever you go. Do not you think that I might be some use to you? I never leave you except at your own request Can it be that you want me to remain behind?"

Who would not have been pleased with such devotion! To hi who did so much and asked so little, she was at that moment as Ru to Naomi; and he told her so. It was pleasant to praise her, and sethe dimpling smile come, and the sweet cyes grow sweeter, and her soft protest that she did not deserve such praise, and to know the afterward she would study how she could most please him, as if his praise had made her happy.

She asked a thousand questions, and he answered what he could Fortunately, his habitual silence as to his intentions, and her own good taste and training, prevented her asking intrusive questions.

"Perhaps I can find some young companion for you there," Glen-

lyon said. "You will want an Italian teacher, and you might have both in one. I will write this evening."

- "How delightful!" she said, with full and gentle gladness. "But when shall we arrive at Sassovivo?"
- "We might manage to be there the 1st of October. The campagna is fine at that season. That will give us another month in England, and a month on the way."
 - "And the house in England?"
 - "Mrs. Kinlock can take it. I think that she will be glad to."

Mrs. Kinlock was glad to take the house, though immeasurably astonished at this sudden oversetting. "I might have known that when he left London wonders never would cease," she said.

The letter to Italy was written, certain family councils were held, and then Glenlyon returned to London, to make all necessary preparations for what might be a final removal. He did not say so to his family, but to his mind there seemed no reason why he should ever return.

He made last visits to all the scenes of his busy life, and made them alone. He said nothing to any one. He only stood and looked, then bowed his head and turned away. But of all his friends he took a serious leave. "I am an old man," he said. "We may not meet again." He was more cheerful with his relatives, for they were already planning to visit Italy the next year.

The evening before they left London, Robert McLellan arrived. There had already been some correspondence with him on the subject of their journey, and he had obtained permission to accompany them as far as Paris and stay there as long as they did.

- "We shall be glad of your company, Robert," his uncle said cordially; and Aurelia seconded the welcome, though with a certain reserve.
- "It is too bad, Aurelia!" he exclaimed to her, when they were alone a moment. "If I were going to Rome, as I long to, then I could not wish for better. But you in Italy and I in England! Do you know, I almost fainted when your first letter reached me? Promise that you will be true to me there!" The boy was half beside himself.
- "You speak as if I were engaged to you; and I am not. You might as well ask your uncle to be true to you," she said. "If you are

going to Paris with us with the expectation of binding me, or of making others think that I am bound, then I would rather you should not go."

"I am going to Paris with my uncle," the young man declared. "I have said so to every one. No one knows that I have spoken to you, unless you have told. And I am sure no one would ever think from your manner to me that we were engaged."

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"I should hope not," she responded tranquilly. Then, "Of course I told my guardian all that you said. It was right that he should know."

Then there were the leave-takings,—a cordial, confused, cumbersome business, with tears and tickets, caresses and carriages, trunks and sighs, and hurry and luncheon, all mingled together,—the short run to Dover, the small misery of the Channel, a brighter sunshine and something gayer in the air, and they were in Paris.

Robert had concluded to let well alone and be happy while he might, and Aurelia, freed from any fears of being misunderstood, treated him charmingly. For a week both were in paradise.

"You see how much better it is to be quiet friends, like broth er and sister, than to be continually exacting and contending," she said to him. "It is a mistake to think so much of love and marriage; it destroys all comfort. Sometimes I have been almost disgusted with men. I never was friendly with one nor took pleasure in his society but he spoiled everything by a declaration. Are you not better contented now than when you were talking of the future?"

"I am very happy now," he was wise enough to say.

They went everywhere, and everywhere together, even to shopping. Acting on a quiet little resolution which had taken root in her mind when first Mrs. Armandale's eyes had blighted her simple costume, Aurelia lost no time in placing herself in a dress-maker's hands, and she wished to have the benefit of Mr. McLellan's artistic taste as well as his company. She did not know, apparently, that in order to choose her colors it was not necessary that he should hold them against her cheek; but if he pilfered the small privilege he at least apprediated it. He took the gloves from the shopman's hand and smoothed them on hers, he laid the mantle over her shoulders, and tied the bonnet under her chin. There was something childlike in it all, bot were so serious.

And then when the new garments were sent home there was

ceremonious trying-on. One article after another was displayed on the pretty figure and gravely criticised or praised. The most upright man, when in love, will seek out many inventions; and it occurred to Mr. Robert McLellan that if he could find a sufficient number of flaws in these costumes to make changes necessary it might prolong a little their stay in Paris, and he accordingly, by his stern strictures on the width of a flounce or the placing of a bow, won two additional days of bliss.

Glenlyon, who usually left them very much to themselves, assisted at this dress-parade with the most trusting seriousness. He considered dress important, and had always dressed like a gentleman. Politics and religion had never decided the width of his hat-brim or the color of his necktie. He not only bade his tailor dress him like other well-bred people, but saw a little to the matter himself, and was even a trifle critical as to his boots and shoes. He entered, therefore, earnestly, if not very intelligently, into the subject of his ward's toilet. At first he made suggestions; but so many little, hesitating, fond objections rose to meet them, and they occasioned so many signs of faint distress, that he perceived at last that he was meddling with a mystery, and kept a humble silence, or contented himself with agreeing with the initiated.

It had occurred to him to buy a present for Aurelia, and he presented it on this occasion. It was a topaz bracelet, richly set. He had a sort of pride in it, the stone glittered so and the work was so fine; and maybe he brought it out now to cover a little his ignorance of gloves and bonnets.

"Oh, how kind you are, and how generous!" cried Aurelia; but she blushed when the bracelet was clasped on her arm, turning it yellow. And he saw, too, a dubious look in Robert's face.

"I took it on condition that it should be exchanged if desirable," he said, with a keen little pang of disappointment. "I do not know what would suit you best, nor what is worn." He remembered his wife, a tall, dark woman, wearing topaz stones. "If you like other colors best, we can easily change it, you know."

"I think that perhaps blue would go better with my dresses," his ward said hesitatingly, still blushing. "But this is beautiful, and I want you to be the one to change and give it to me. It was so kind of you to think of giving me one."

"Robert, will you go with me?" he said, and took the little casket back and sat looking down at it.

"Yes, sir. And perhaps you will go at the same time and look at some new pictures with me, and give me your opinion of them," the young man said, seating himself beside his uncle and laying an affectionate hand on his arm. "I know that you do not pretend to be a technical judge, and that is the very reason why your opinion is of value. A painter naturally grows to think so much of skill that he may value a picture for the execution, when the subject is worse than worthless, or even may be led to overvalue the subject because it is well done. I have often found myself going that way, though I know it is a downward way in art. What I want of you is to tell me if certain things are worthy of spending study and labor on."

Age is not tenacious of anything but habit. When Aurelia came back into the room with another pretty dress on, her guardian's trivial pain was forgotten, and they both appealed so to him that he almost thought he did know what the length of a train ought to be. The dress was white, with a soft, creamy tint and a cerulean border.

"Let me see," she said, and took the casket from her guardian's hands and clasped the bracelet on her arm again. "It certainly concentrates the color of the dress. But don't you think that, on the whole, turquoises would do better? You know I have so little color, and so much of what I have is yellow."

"I'm sure they would, dear," Glenlyon said. And, as the two went back to their discussion, he looked at them with fond tears in his eyes. They certainly loved him well, he thought.

"I was a rustic," Aurelia said, turning herself about before the glass. "What a difference a proper dress makes! I am much indebted to Mrs. Armandale for showing me how dowdy I was."

"You are an angel," was the low reply. "I must paint you in dress, and put wings on you."

And then, while Glenlyon went out to walk in the park opposite their windows, declining company, Aurelia sat and made up her counts with Robert, setting down the price of all her finery in a little book already half full of her small orderly expenditures. told him the price of everything, and how much cheaper some this were in Paris than in England. And all the homely little details,

she told them, floated, to his fancy, like bright weeds on a full golden stream of household love and confidence and a delicious simple intimacy.

She told him how much money she had. Her father had left her two hundred pounds a year. This her guardian had invested and put all aside for her. She had lived with him as his own daughter might, and he had given her a small allowance. She had never spent any of her own money until now. Now she was twenty-one, and in future she was to have her income and do what she pleased with it. It was much increased. It was now two hundred and fifty pounds.

"You are richer than I am," he said. "All I have is the ten thousand pounds my uncle Robert left me; and that I shall have only when I am twenty-five. Of course my father makes me an allowance."

At last the moment came when they must part. And in that last moment Aurelia fell weeping into McLellan's arms. "It is like losing sight of my only brother," she sobbed. "I love you like a dear and only brother."

He had hard work not to weep with her. He could not say a word. He had already promised to move heaven and earth to win his parents' consent to his going to Rome to study. He kissed her cheek in silence and swallowed a sob.

The carriage waited, and Glenlyon had already gone down to it. Then, a few minutes later, the train moved, and there was the flutter of a white handkerchief from the window of the car, and a face almost as white watching it from the station.

And then the world slipped in between them.

CHAPTER VIII.

- FATHER SEGNERI.

THE new palace of the Cagliostri, which was but little more than a hundred years old, was merely a handsome country-house built of rough stones and covered with yellow-washed stucco. It was a square structure, facing the west with an unbroken front, and having two backward-projecting wings. To foreign eyes it was a pleasant house,

having none of those squalid points in the midst of grandeur, and half-walled-up windows looking like bleared eyes, which disfigure so many Italian palaces.

The house stood between two gardens,—the one on the left, next the town of Sassovivo, bright with flowers, arbors, and tossing foun-That next the gray old Monterone partook of the sternness of its neighborhood. It consisted of wide avenues walled in by lofty hedges of box. Some of these avenues were very long; other short intersecting ones made the place somewhat of a labyrinth. At the end of the long ones, on entering, one might see a statue standing white and solitary, or a vase with a great mask on the wall behind it. A scented atmosphere of mingled box-odor and violets hung over the rich gloom of these walks, and a mysterious silence reigned within Boughs and branches rose here and there over the green walls; but the glance could not penetrate them and see what was within-Only the initiated knew where to find those gaps through which pushing one's self, could be found quiet open spaces of wild, untrain The grass and weeds grew uncut, the trees unpruned, wil flowers tossed on their long stems like flames, and in spring there was a purple mist of violets all over the ground. But without one walke as unsuspecting of this hidden life as of the riot of ungoverned natural under many a grave and formal face encountered in the world. N fountains tossed their spray within the sombre stateliness of thi retreat; but here and there, against a wall, or from under the dense green of the hedges, some sculptured stone, a mask, or a sarcophagus, gave out a slender stream of faintly-trickling water, pure and cold from the mountain-top.

At the close of a summer day a lady and gentleman walked slowly through one of these avenues. The few sun-rays that entered touched the green leaves or fell on the gravel like coals of fire, so shadowed was the light between the hedges. A bird dropped to the path before them, watched their approach, and, when they were near, flew up into the bright air again.

The lady was graceful, slender, and fifty years of age. She carried in her hand the train of a black-and-gold brocade dinner-dress, and, while listening to her companion, looked down with evident complaisance at the pretty foot that peeped from under her silken petticoat. She was an admirably well preserved woman, and, though dark-haired, was as white as swan's-down.

The gentleman beside her was a famous Jesuit preacher and confessor,—Father Segneri. He had once been the lady's confessor, but his long visits in other cities than Rome had rendered the continuance of such a relation impossible, though she still asked his advice whenever occasion offered. He was now come to spend twenty-four hours at the villa, and had but just arrived. Father Segneri was a notably small man, nearly seventy years of age, white-haired, quick-speaking, and vivacious of manner. His thin and intellectual face had the pallor of age, but his black eyes sparkled with the vivacity of youth. "I re-Joice with you, duchess," he said, continuing their conversation, "that Leopold at length consents to your wishes. And I am doubly rejoiced that dissipation and vice have had the effect of disgusting instead of en slaving him. It shows that the foundation of his nature is good. s partly due, moreover, to the early religious education which you Faithfully gave him. The impressions of infancy and childhood are ne er entirely effaced."

You are kind in saying so, reverend father," the lady replied in a clear voice like a child's. "I did, indeed, try to inspire him with religious principles, and his later teachers performed their duty fully. But of late years, since he has gone so much astray, I have feared that in some way I might have been unconsciously neglectful. However, he is at last willing to leave Paris and take a wife of my choosing. It remains now to find the wife."

"Not difficult, I should imagine," the priest remarked briefly.

"Nor is it so easy, father. We must consent to receive new blood, and we must have a large fortune. On many accounts I consider new blood an advantage; and I prefer an American. We can have no entanglements there. A girl from America is like a girl from the moon. Besides, they have no prejudices. They fall entirely in with our ways, and learn quickly how to comport themselves."

"Have you any one in view?" her companion inquired when she paused.

"There is one," she said slowly. Then, changing her tone, "That was one of the disadvantages of Leopold's position. In Paris he was confounded with a crowd of titles from every part of the world, some

of them new and some apocryphal. He loses his consequence out of Italy. This girl knew nothing of our family, and had undoubtedly heard stories of his wild life. She came to Italy last winter, and I made her acquaintance. She was evidently impressed, and made herself so amiable that I invited her to come out here for a day or two. Next winter again she will be in Rome."

"Leopold knew her, then, in Paris?" the father asked.

The duchess hesitated for a breath, and a momentary expression of mortification passed over her face. Then she laughed musically in the same childish voice.

"He knew her to his cost," she said, "for the girl refused him. It is true, she encouraged and flirted with him first as only an American girl can. He was amused by her refusal, and wrote me about it. 'I beg your pardon for my mistake,' he said: 'I was under the impression that you wished to be a duchess.' 'Oh,' she replied languidly, 'there are so many men who wish to make me a duchess or a princess; and one wishes to make me a queen.'"

A faint smile stirred the gentleman's lips. "She must be very rich," he remarked.

"Incredibly so, it is said. But one can never be sure of those American fortunes. My cousin Gabriella married her son to an American girl whose father promised her five thousand scudi a year. For three years the money was paid regularly; then the father failed, and she has not received a centesimo since. We shall insist on this girl's money down,—the greater part of it, at least. Leopold has been five years in Paris, and the money he has spent!—"

Her lifted hands and eyes completed the sentence.

As the two approached an intersecting path, they came upon a lady who sat on a stone bench arranging a handful of wild-flowers. She was a pale, sallow woman of forty, with dark hair and luminous eyes. She wore black, and was dressed with great simplicity. It was the Countess Emilia Coronari.

She rose immediately on seeing who came toward her, seemed for an instant disposed to retire precipitately, and blushed as she made her courtesy.

"Oh, Emilia!" the duchess said cordially, and presented her to Father Segneri. "You must have heard of the countess as Siria, father. She was a school-fellow of mine, and has been so kind as to come to me for a while as governess to Clotilda."

As the lady was presented to him, it became evident that the father could smile very brightly. He offered his hand to the poetess, and, as she bent over it, by a graceful movement which seemed to be half accidental she let her flowers fall and scatter themselves at his feet. More than once she had made one of the crowd who flocked to hear Father Segneri's eloquent sermons.

- "I have heard of, and read, Siria," he said. "And I am one of many who regret her long silence. Is it impossible to renew those days when a crowded company could forget to whisper even while listening to her poems?"
- "Ah, reverendissimo Padre," she said, with a sigh, "since then I have lived"—her voice failed—"and died so much!"
- "It is that which gives the soul to poetry and to preaching," he said cheerfully. "An inexperienced singer is but a linnet. I hope to hear something from you before leaving the palace."
- "If anything could inspire me, it would be the hope of giving pleasure to you," the lady replied.
- "I prophesy that we shall have a poem this evening or to-morrow morning," the duchess said, in a pleasant voice, as she made a movement to continue her walk.

The father lingered an instant before joining her, as if he would have liked further conversation with the countess, but was forced to go on.

Poetry makes frequently a more vivid impression on men than on women. A woman whose life is diluted by a thousand trivialities conceives of poetry trivially; while upon the sterner background of a man's habitual thoughts, if he be not all unworthy, it comes as a sweet surprise. As one who walks in a rough way by night, patient and calm, maybe, neither longing nor complaining, as if all roads were rough and it were needful always to take care how one should set one's steps, if he should hear a nightingale, stops short and smiles, remembering delight, and walks on softly, listening if it will sing again,—so this man heard poetry.

For the duchess, she liked a graceful rhyme, and admired the talent of her school-fellow, wondering over her now and then. To be poetic was a way some people had, as they had a way of walking prettily, floating with a quiet motion and the head at ease. Had you told her that true poetry is the honey of all the fields of life, and when at its best is religion at its best, how her laugh would have rung out, mocking and clear!

"Poor Emilia!" she said. "She has never recovered from the shock of her unfortunate marriage. It was crushing to her. Not that the count was much worse than others; but she was exaltie and had impossible ideas. Many of her friends advised her strongly against the marriage, but she would believe nothing, and married him after a three months' acquaintance. He liked her, certainly, and, as she was then the fashion, it gratified his vanity to win her. But fidelity was impossible to him. He behaved ill, and she left him. We She insisted thought that she would die. She refused all advice. that it was degradation and sin to live with him, knowing what he When the count followed her, she came here to live in her brother's house, from which she could exclude him. For a while her friends were displeased with her; but he turned out so very ill before he died that they forgave her at last. She is quite poor, and it has taken all she had to pay her daughter's expenses in the convent. So 1 asked her to come to me and take charge of Clotilda till she shall be old enough to go away from home."

"It was a fortunate combination," the priest remarked.

"And this brings me to a subject on which I wish to have your counsel," the lady continued. "Emilia's daughter, Aurora, gives much thought. Her term of school is finished, and she has no homeoner is it easy to find a husband for her; for she has scarcely anything. We can procure a few portions here and there, one of mine and out of the duke's for Sassovivo, and something, perhaps, in Rome. But at best it will be but two or three hundred scudi; and men demands much nowadays. It must be said that both Aurora and the countest are also somewhat extravagant in their demands. Emilia is almost afraid to have her marry at all. But that is nonsense. Now a situation is offered her which might lead to something better, and will, a any rate, give her a home for a while. Of course I could not have her here, with Leopold coming home. Emilia and Aurora have quit set their hearts on accepting this offer, but I do not feel sure that is advisable."

She paused for breath. Her companion uttered an interrogative "Well?"

She went on: "There is a Scotchman who has had an apartment in the castle since the time of the old duke, but he has never lived here. He was born here. His mother was of a respectable family, the Lirici, who have quite died out in Sassovivo. Now this gentleman is coming here with a young ward to spend the winter, and he wants a young lady of her own age to be companion and Italian teacher for her. Of course there should be an older person to look after them both; but that can be managed afterward. There is no gentleman in the family except this old man. Now, it seemed to me an opening for Aurora. These foreigners pay so well, and she could lay aside all that he gives her. He wrote that he wanted a lady-like girl, and that she would be treated quite as one of the family."

It was evident that, in spite of her seeming doubts, the duchess favored the project.

"The family are Protestant," the priest asserted. "I know the man well by reputation. He is a free-thinker."

"Oh, he is Catholic by birth," the lady replied eagerly. "He was baptized here. I have seen his name in the parish records. And if he has been unbelieving in England, he will here naturally return to his early faith. Of the girl I know nothing. Of course she will yield to the strongest influence."

"What sort of girl is Aurora?" her companion asked.

The duchess opened her mouth to speak, and closed it again. "Aurora is a girl hard to define," she said then.

The priest waited tranquilly for the definition.

" È un carattere!" the lady said rather suddenly, as if the words had escaped her. "She is quiet and sweet in manner, but she gives me the impression of a hidden force which may break forth yet in some unexpected way. I have never known her to say or do anything out of order; yet I am never sure of her. She does not talk. The nuns say that she is very religious, but very quick-tempered. She alternately sees heavenly visions and flies into earthly rages. She has, however, a good heart."

The priest smiled at this description. "She is, perhaps, a poetess," he said.

- "I am half afraid so," said the lady, sighing. "Yet I begged the nuns to guard her from that."
- "Why should you?" said her companion quickly. "Let her sing, duchess. If her songs do no good, they will probably do no harm. They may keep her out of some mischief."
- "What! you would approve of her being encouraged to write poetry?" the duchess exclaimed.
- "There are two sorts of poetry," the priest replied. "There is a spiritual poetry with earthly images. Of that kind is the inspired poetry of the Bible. The other is physical poetry with spiritual images. I do not expect such poetry from this girl."
- "But would it not be better she should avoid both, since neither can be of any use to the world?" the duchess said anxiously.
- "Can you be sure that she might not write what would be of use to the world?" the priest asked. "The religious combat of the day is in the field of literature, and the heat of the fight is in poetry and fiction. A favorite poet, and, still more, a powerful writer of fiction, wields a greater influence than any preacher or legislator. We lay great stress on the early education of children. But the poet and the novelist appeal to the undying child in the heart of man. When they are bad, they can go back, under the years, to the child's heart hidden in the layers of the man's heart, and smooth out, as no other can, all traces of early virtuous teaching. When they are good, they recall and strengthen the early aspirations in every heart that was ever capable of aspiring. Our pupils grow out from under our influence; theirs never do. Let us, then, use the same weapons for truth which others use for falsehood, and let us not undervalue them. If Aurora wishes to be a poetess, let her sing, since she has a religious mind and a good heart. And let her accept this position."
- "And you say, father, that the Church needs poetry and novels?" the lady said, stupefied, but hopeful. She read a great many novels, chiefly French ones, and had sometimes accused herself regarding them.
 - "We need good ones."
- "I have always believed that the Church condemned all such things," she said.
 - "What gave you that impression?" her companion asked abruptly.

"Why, Father Coramboni always speaks against them, and he has spoken of Aurora. He thinks that all Emilia's misfortunes came from her being so romantic and poetic."

"Is she the only woman who has married ill?" Father Segneri asked. "That seems to be her only misfortune. Otherwise her life looks to me like a success. She is a noble woman; she has genius; she has refused a base companionship; and—she has the friendship of the Signora Duchessa."

The duchess smiled, and swept a little courtesy as she walked.

"Madama," said the priest, marking out his words with the forefinger of his right hand on the palm of his left, "you must learn to distinguish between the Church and the clergy."

She laughed. "I never shall, father! I never shall!" she said.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CASTLE.

THE Countess Emilia had already obtained permission of the duchess to go out. The afternoon lessons of the little Donna Clotilda were over, and the child was driving out with her father. It was a relief for the governess, who had but little liberty to follow her own ways.

"I want to go up to the castle, to see Chiara and learn what is going on," she had said.

It would have been thought strange if she had not given an account of herself.

Chiara had been her maid at the time of Aurora's birth, and was now the wife of the duke's administrator. They lived in Glenlyon's apartment.

The way to the castle led through the flower-garden and up a rugged path among the rocks that partly separated the palace grounds from the town. She ran lightly up the zigzag, turning now and then to look about her and draw in a full breath of the pure, sweet air. Pleasure gave a color to her face, making her almost beautiful. She was like a bird escaped from a cage. She very seldom went out alone. When not with her pupil, she accompanied the duchess. Though

there were hours in which she might consider herself free, it was little in accordance with their ideas of propriety that she, still a young woman, should go out alone. Even while admired for that poetry which celebrated nature, sentiment, and religion, by an inconsistency but too common, she was tacitly forbidden the opportunity to study nature; sentiment, except in verse, would have been held to be out of place in her; and to have abandoned herself to religious contemplation in any of those grand old churches which are so well calculated by their architecture and adornments to lift the mind above earthly things would, she well knew, have drawn evil tongues upon her.

Passing through a narrow street of the town, she turned to the right, where a crumbling stone gateway led to a narrow passage with a high stone wall at either side. This passage, called the Gola, was but a rod in length, and led to the rock on which the castle was built, and was its only connection with the town. In ancient times there had been a heavy sliding gate at either end. The slides were still visible and perfect in the live stone; but the gates had long since disappeared, and the walls were so broken that one could look over in several places to the dark ravines below. One passed from the Gola into a court-yard paved with small square stones. Here and there among them showed a smooth space where the ledge pushed through The castle foundations had been fitted into angles and peaks of the crag, teeth of stone held by the iron mortar of pozzolana shuttin down with an adamantine clasp into teeth of splintered rock. Not point had been broken away in building. The cellars had been mad in natural fissures of the rock, and were an irregular labyrinth of chambers with flinty walls and dry, gravelly floors. The castle had surrounded three sides of the court, but the wings were quite in ruins, and there remained only the western front, wherein the father of Glenlyon had rebuilt his apartment.

When the Countess Emilia reached the court, the wide central door of the castle was standing open into a vast, dim hall. Over the door was a beautiful arched window with a stone balcony. Two dark-blue vases set in iron rings fixed in the stone outside the balcony were overflowing with pinks that grew there the year round. Other windows to right and left showed that the rooms were habitable. But the principal rooms were at the opposite side, looking westward.

There was no person in sight. The countess went softly up the steps, smiling at the thought that she was going to give a pleasant surprise. The hall was vacant, but a door stood open into a kitchen almost as large; and from thence came signs of life. A woman's voice was heard giving orders to a servant:

"Get those thrushes ready for the spit, and then go out to the piazza for five soldi worth of anchovies. And bring me a soldo of chiccory for salad."

The countess stepped lightly to the kitchen door, and saw a stout, fresh-faced woman standing before a trough of flour, in which she was setting the yeast for the next day's bread-baking. She beat the yeast into the centre, drew the flour over it, smoothed the white mound with a practised hand, and made a cross with her finger in the top of it. Then she set the trough in the great flour-bin against the wall, and, turning, saw her visitor stand smiling in the door.

"Oh! Signora mia carissima!" she cried, and ran all floury to pour out her welcome, her arms held backward. "I cannot touch you, Signora Contessa: I am all flour. I should like to kiss your hand, but you will have to hold it to me."

The lady smilingly touched the woman's lips with her slender fingers.

Then Chiara, with many excuses, washed her hands, snatched off her soiled apron and tied on a clean one, and invited her visitor to the salone.

They went up-stairs to a very stately, if very shabby, drawing-room, with windows commanding a magnificent view over the campagna and mountains to the distant sea.

- "How beautiful it is here!" the lady exclaimed, looking out. "I have been so long shut up in the city that I feel like one out of prison. This view is much finer than that from the palace."
- "Altro, contessa mia! But to think that we have got to leave it for that brigandaccio of a Scotchman! Who knows what sends him here after so many years?"
- "Oh, Chiara! that is hardly fair," her visitor said. "This gentleman has paid the rent of the house a long time without living in it, and you have lived in it a long time without paying. Besides, you know, it was his father who made it habitable."

Chiara shrugged her shoulders and lifted her eyebrows with an

expression which still protested. "It is hard to go, for all that," she said. "And to lose the vigna too." She nodded her head up and down. "The duchess will be very sorry to lose that little vigna. She keeps the wine of it for her own particular friends. Just you wait a moment, contessa mia!" and she rose with smiling significance.

"Nothing for me, Chiara, positively nothing!" cried the visitor, who understood the movement, but also understood that to leave a house in that town without eating and drinking in it would be held as a sin against all the rules of hospitality and courtesy.

Her refusal was taken as a part of the programme. Everybody refuses at least once, some refuse ten times; but they always end by eating and drinking. The woman went smiling out of the room, and presently returned with a tray, on which were set a plate of those omnipresent ring-cakes called *ciambelli*, and a small flask.

"Oh, Chiara!" sighed the lady.

"Of course you must have something after climbing those rocks," Chiara said; and there was an air of self-congratulation about her, as of one who is going to cover herself with glory. "You know," she went on, twisting up a bunch of flax in her fingers, "that, of course, we give all the wine of the Scotch vigna to the duke. Sometimes he sees to the making of it himself, and the grapes are always dried in the sun a few days, and picked from the stems before they are pressed. It's a good deal of work; but—" a smiling up-and-down nod of the head, with the lips pressed close, and the eyes opened as if contemplating a wonder, showed that the result justified the labor. "It isn't any more than fair, you know," she went on deprecatingly, "that we should keep a little sample for ourselves. This is positively the only flask we have."

The countess was too much accustomed to these universal small robberies, and to the universal excusing and condoning of them, to feel herself very guilty in drinking the duchess's own wine in her servants' house. She did not know any one who would have hesitated.

"It is the only flask we have," repeated Chiara, lying with the utmost sincerity and a comfortable consciousness of a long row of similar flasks in the cellar. "I want you to see what the duchess is losing." She pushed the bunch of flax gently into the neck of the flask till it touched and absorbed the thin layer of olive oil that pro-

tected the wine from the air. Tossing this out of the window, she carefully cleaned the neck of the flask, then tipped it over one of the glasses with the air of performing an important ceremony.

"There!" she said, as the golden drops fell like liquid sunshine, and an odor as of flowers diffused itself around. "The duchess gives that after the fish, instead of—of—cosa—"

"Château Yquem," supplied the lady. "It is delicious!" she added, delicately sipping the wine. "But I really do not care for fine wines. The Castelli Romani are as good as I wish for."

Chiara glanced about for a stopper, and, seeing none, pressed a large red-ripe cherry into the flask,—pressed it so hard that a bright crimson drop fell from it and lay undissolved on the surface of the *vin santo*.

"Giovanni has got a house for us to go into," she said, returning to her grievances. "But it is in the middle of the town, and I am afraid that the children will suffer, they are used to so much light and air."

"But I have an idea for you, and I have come on purpose to tell you," the countess said. "I have been troubled by the thought of your going into the town. How would you like to live in the apartment I had in my brother's house when you were with me? The family there are going to Rome, and I have written my brother to retain it for you if you should want it. It will cost you no more than one in the town. I hope that Giovanni has not actually promised?"

Chiara was delighted. She had been thinking as much of the mortification as of the inconvenience of a removal,—quite aware that to go from a castle to a dingy house in a narrow street was a descent in the social scale, and that the haughty wives of certain bakers, shoemakers, grocers, and fruit-venders would rejoice at her fall. As for that aristocratic and exclusive lady, the apothecary's wife, who sometimes came up to the castle with a handkerchief on her head, she could never hope to be visited by her in the plebeian Via Lunga. But to occupy a house a little apart from the herd, and, above all, the very apartment where her dear Contessa had lived, and where the Contessaina Aurora was born, that was quite another thing. It was, in fact, far more honorable than to live in an apartment belonging to a wild Scotchman who was undoubtedly a brigand of a Protestant. Chiara was pious, and wished to have nothing to do with any one but Christians.

All this she thought while pouring out her thanks.

And then her visitor asked to see the house. "It is so long sing I have seen the rooms," she said; "and I never saw them all."

It was a fine apartment, though incredibly dingy. A large chamber corresponding with the salone, and intended for a dining-room, lookes out through the arched window and balcony toward the Gola, the two occupying the width of the building. Southward from these werfour smaller rooms, and northward, across the hall-like landing of the stairs, were two large chambers, ordered to be kept closed by their owners.

"You see, I have not even opened these rooms," Chiara said, producing the keys. "He did not even allow us to take care of them, but had some forestiere come here from time to time to see to them. haven't an idea what there is inside."

"Oh, there's no harm in my seeing them," the lady said, not be lieving a word of what was told her. "He merely wished some of the old things to be taken care of; and it was quite natural. There was no secret shut up."

In fact, when the door was opened, with great affectation of the lock being difficult to turn, there were but too evident signs of a hasty removal. A few corn-husks had fallen from a mattress, and a worn little shoe forgotten under a table had certainly not remained the from the time when Glenlyon was a child, more than seventy year before. The faded brocade and leather chairs and old carved table and cabinets were scarcely so dusty as they should have become in the course of a year or two of undisturbed possession. The truth was that this had been the summer sleeping-room of Chiara and her husband and their youngest child, the more fragile part of the furniture having been placed in the inner room, and hastily brought out again when notice was received that a friend of the long-absent owner might be expected almost any day to come and put the place in order.

The two women walked about, went up to the terrace, and out to the western front of the house, where these was a narrow walk with a parapet. This walk had in ancient times been only a rock; but the kind years had little by little added a soil, and those airy farmers, the birds and the winds, had brought seeds there, and it was now a mat of grass and wild-flowers.

"And now, Chiara," the countess said, with an air of decision, "I

am not going to take up any more of your time. Giovanni will soon come home for his supper, and I know that you will allow no one but yourself to see to the roasting of those tordi. I have a fancy for going down to the terrace vigna by myself, and afterward I may go up to the flower-terrace again. You may leave me quite alone, and I will take care of myself. I will say good-by to you now."

Chiara remembered what she considered the lady's eccentricities of old, and also that a poetess is an unaccountable being; and she therefore allowed her visitor to go away alone, after a thousand compliments. Nevertheless, as one never knows what any one will do, she slipped up-stairs from time to time and peeped out from behind a curtain, and not only watched the countess, but swept with keen eyes all the scene about. There might be a lover in the case; and even if he could not climb the wild rocks and meet his lady in the vigna, he still might stand at a distance and exchange signs with her. Dearly as she loved her former mistress and present benefactress, if Chiara had not been able to see her every movement and assure herself that no one had met the lady, she would have imagined at once an intrigue of some sort and whispered it to her husband when he came in.

Meantime, the countess went down one of those narrow stairs cut in the rock to a narrow terrace. Here were a few rows only of grapes, heavy with their green clusters. At the northern end, in a sheltered corner of the rock, stood a pomegranate-tree red with blossoms. There were pomegranate-trees everywhere in Sassovivo. A second stair led to a lower and wider terrace; and here against the sheltered rock were tall lemon-trees full of blossoms and spread out like vines. It was warmer here, and the grapes were beginning to take on a tinge of yellow. Still a third stair, and still a wider terrace, where, behind the long rows of vines that pressed on the supporting canes till they bent, a peach- and a cherry-tree had taken root, and all the rock was lined And then there was a fourth stair leading to the last terrace. Every pains had been taken with this, for here were large black grapes not easy to procure, and yielding a juice colored like a carbuncle. A fig-tree and fringe of pomegranates hung about the rock, pomegranates started out to right and left in other gardens, and the duke's olive-trees flowed like a dull green sea below. A breeze came along from the west, and the murky green turned all a sudden silver; and with the sunset shining over the trees, the silver waves caught here and there tinges of rose-color.

The Countess Emilia wandered about, full of delight, pausing to admire a broad leaf, a bunch of grapes, or a tendril which had clasped the yellow cane in lucent green ring after ring; or to catch the rose-light on the rocks, or see how hill after hill of the campagna came out distinctly as the silvery mist thickened behind it, and how the same mist filtered into a great mountain-mass that had seemed to have but one shape, dividing it into many mountains with round or pointed summits. The silent air was sweet with delicate vine-odors; the campagna beyond the olives had every tint of green seen through a rosy haze. Only one cloud tinging the wide, bright scene hung in the transparent sky; and there was silence.

The countess stood beneath the fig-tree, and looked up at its large green fruit, and reached her slender hand to pinch them softly and find one fully ripe. One a little yellowed showed an amber drop at the point. She pulled it from under its large five-fingered leaf, pulled it open with a pinch at either side, and sucked out the honeyed pulp-The very rind, tender and flaky, was like honey. She leaned over the rough parapet, and saw a flock of goats coming down from the tow by one of the narrow rocky ways. They set their mincing steps li ladies; they broke into little whirls of turning and skipping; not o could walk soberly five minutes, but must turn and leap, light as acrobat. Their coming was a laughter and a dance, and Pan was sure! with them. At a fountain on a smooth plot of grass below they stoppeto drink, and, having drunk, climbed here and there to stand or lie o bits of broken wall or stones, disdaining the smooth grasses. The longhorned ram, who had maintained more dignity than his playful harem chose a rock that one of them had taken, and, being snubbed, pushed the presuming one off and ran after to castigate her. The shepherd flung a small stone and hit him on the horn, and brought him back subdued.

Those shepherds fling their small sharp stones, with the force of a shot, from their hands only, and so cunningly as to strike always the horns of their flock. It would fare ill with the flesh their flying missile struck. They are a strange race,—wicked, witty, and brutish; superstitious, too, beyond their fellows. They can tell the time of

night by the stars, nor err ten minutes in their reckoning. The contadini fear them, and think their own rifles a scant protection against the shepherds' pointed stones. Their life is hard and miserable. They sleep on the wet ground with their little movable cabin over them shut down like a cover over a plate that has a whole fish on it, except that there is no plate. With all its cold and damp, they do not fear the winter; but when the soft airs of February blow they begin to look askanee, for March to them is a demon. In March the serpents wake, and all the creeping things come out, and the lightning kills, and the sun sucks poison into the blood and turns the brain strange. They will not speak the name of March. They call it "the month next to April."

The poetess looked at everything, and everything was in tune. Nature gave her the key, and her imagination began to hum. It flew hither and thither, confused and intoxicated by the riches from which it must choose.

Father Segneri's sympathy had touched and inspired her. She knew his character and admired him. There were no excuses to make for him, no struggle to reverence his office while loathing himself, no shrinking at seeing him at the altar, as if one were assisting at a sacrilege. He was clean, he was courageous, he was full of soul and gracious of mien. He was manly, gentlemanly, and a man of God. It was worth while singing to please him. And when that first doubt and despair of imminent creation was past, and the thought was found and began to take form, she was secure of pleasing. When an Æolian nature sings, it does not fear nor doubt, for that which plays upon it is above itself.

CHAPTER X.

MORNING RED AND MORNING GOLD.

IT was October in Sassovivo, and the new tenants of Castel Cagliostro were hourly expected.

There had been some correspondence between the Countess Emilia and Glenlyon, and the result was a very friendly understanding, and much contentment on the part of the lady. Her offer to make the place ready for them had been gratefully accepted. Miss Winfield would bring an English maid with her; but they would want a cook, a housemaid, and a man-servant, and the countess was to make such a selection and offer such wages as would be considered suitable in that place. As to her daughter, Glenlyon and his ward professed themselves obliged instead of obliging in having her to live with them, and expressed their wish that Aurora should look upon them as friends and not as employers. Moreover, understanding that she had no home, Glenlyon invited her to take possession of the apartment as soon as it should be habitable, with whatever service and company should be necessary, the support of the establishment being at his charge. If the engagements of the countess would allow of her being her daughter's companion till he should come, he would be very glad.

Such a prospect was a vision of enchantment to the mother and her daughter; and the duchess completed their happiness by giving her child's governess a week's vacation before the arrival of the travellers. This week they passed together at the castle in bright hours of busy delight.

A plan and a description of the apartment had been sent to Glenlyon and Aurelia, who selected their own bedrooms and assigned Aurora's to her. A man and wife had been found for the two principal posts in the ménage, Gian as man-servant and Giovanna as cook. Gian was a slender, wiry man of an enthusiastic servility, who talked and gesticulated in a wonderful manner. He had the excellent vice of believing that all his geese were swans. As a natural consequence, he was inclined to believe that other people's swans were geese. master pro tem. was to him, as the duke profanely expressed it, "the fourth person of the Blessed Trinity." The man was slight, darkhued, and bright-faced. His wife was fully twice his size, was rosy with many good dinners, and smiling with the anticipation of many more. By an admirable reciprocation of empire, the two alternately browbeat each other, and were never known to be angry at the same time, living in the utmost harmony and held by all to be a loving and happy couple. When Giovanna, flinging aside her indolent goodnature, put on the virago, Gian bowed his head. If she told him to hold his tongue, he held it. If she ordered him out of the house, he meekly went. And when, in his turn, Gian became possessed of their solitary household demon, his wife held her tongue if he bade her, or "roared him an it were a nightingale," dodging an occasional missile, and harboring no malice. In short, this excellent pair had discovered the secret of domestic felicity and of a just and perfect union.

The housemaid was from the distant mountain-town of Monte Fortino, renamed by the Italian government Artena, with some hope, possibly, of improving its morals. A pope had once thought seriously of destroying this place on account of its sins. That we do not hear of his holiness ever having, for the same reason, contemplated the destruction of any other town belonging to him, is abundant proof of the unearthly vileness of Artena. The city is built upon a small cone-shaped mountain that lies close to the northern side of the Vol-For many a bitter winter day it does not feel the warming touch of a single sun-ray. The people shiver there amid their frosty stones, while far and wide about them the plain lies shining in the sunlight. At crystalline morning and evening their topmost pinnacle remains a cold, despairing gray, while all the neighboring mountainheights are glowing rose and gold, and the splendid Sabines across the plain hold sunshine a thing so common that they draw up their skirting mists against it, choosing a prouder purple, and far-off Soracte, herculean and shamefaced, weaves his shining web among the laugh-None of these glories are for them. In their damp and ing hills. chilly air their blood grows sour, their hearts burn, their brows grow black. Their daggers are ready at a word; but even the blades do not glitter, and the blood they draw is dull. They contend, they steal, they murder: violence is their pastime. Many a sindaco have they assassinated for trying to enforce the laws. If the stranger go among them, let him be wary. Their fame is evil all the country round.

Between the knife-blade and the fist they pray to the Madonna. They lift up their poor lacerated hearts, torn by the wild-cats of their passions, to a shining compassionate Woman crowned with stars and loved of God, who for her sake will one day deliver them from the torments of poverty and strife, and cool the fever in their blood, and smooth away the angry furrows from their brows, and loosen into smiles the acrid lines about their mouths, and make love possible. Of Christ they have no conception, though they name him, hail the Babe at Christmas, and lament the Crucified on Good Friday. His purity,

his patience, his divine forbearance, his dazzling holiness, they have nothing to do with. To them religion means a loving, indulgent Mother, who screens her children even when they do evil. They love her, her name is ever on their lips, they hide their faces in her lap and in her breast and all about her feet, and think God will not touch them there. They bring her stolen property: "Do not be angry with me, Maria Santissima. I will give thee half." They are pagans who see but the twinkling day-star of Christianity and know not its sun. Their Madonna is the radiant heiress of the gods. She is Juno without the pride and jealousy, Venus without the caprice or the folly, Minerva without the severity. She is the rose of motherly love without a thorn. She is not far away in some visionary, inaccessible heaven: she is the mother up-stairs, or down-stairs, or in the next room, or gone to visit a neighbor; and if they call she hears them. The brigand, with his wiry black hair sprinkled with blood, and the hoary thief, who steals with one hand while he blesses himself with the other, kneel before her in the misery of their inevitable sins, and, being in their faith as little children, heavenly mercy yet can spare them, remembering the time before their ignorance became a monster. Let him who shares the counsels of the Father of mankind judge these ill-fated souls. Crushed underneath a wretched heritage of cycles of oppression and of ignorance, it well may seem they cannot choose but sin.

After their sunless winter comes a day when there is a shining just above their heads, and a later day when the topmost point of their town flickers at noon like a candle-flame; and so the glory grows, till on a certain saint's day, when they walk out in procession, 'tis all a summer brightness in the town, and they say that they go out to meet the sun.

From this town, then, came the girl who was to serve in Castel Cagliostro, and, though she came from it, she was honest, faithful, and pure. She was an example of an exceptional revulsion from vice, as we sometimes see an exceptional revulsion from virtue. Her name was Mariuccia,—that is, sweet Mary,—and they called her Mariù. She was somewhat stunted in growth, and as strong as an oak. She had crisp black hair curling back from low on the brows and temples, brilliant black eyes, short features, dazzling teeth, a bright color, a

serious look, a brazen voice, and a rare but exquisite smile. She always hung her head when she smiled, as if ashamed of smiling. At other times she was upright and masculine in manner. She was not so much reserved as walled up. Of her inner life, if she had any, no one knew. A few simple facts and sentiments were all that transpired. Perhaps there was no more.

The countess, accustomed to exercising a rigid economy and to a style of living in which a little dinginess is never wanting, made but a timid use of the liberty given her to spend; but her taste made the place bright and picturesque. They could not fail to be pleased, she thought, as she made the circuit of the rooms when all was done, and tried to imagine the first effect of them on a stranger. There were flowers, but not too many, for an Italian always objects to their strong odors in the house; but branches of laurel, box, and elder and wreaths of ivy gave a freshness to the rooms. The windows were all open, showing the magnificent campagna, and the curtains were "like a powder of snow from the eaves." The servants were in their places, and the table laid for dinner for three persons,—for the countess meant to receive the travellers and go away immediately, leaving them free from all hospitable cares at the moment of their arrival. The duchess had sent a dolce from her own kitchen for the dinner.

The Countess Emilia went up to the roof-terrace. It lacked yet an hour of the time when the train would stop at the station a mile distant, but Gian had already gone there to meet them with the only carriage to be hired in the town. This hour would give him a good long gossip with the men at the station. He would tell of all the wonderful works at the castle, celebrate the grandeur and the fabulous riches of the strangers, boast of the amount of his and his wife's wages, and be a great man till the arrival of a greater should extinguish him.

Meantime, the countess stood looking dreamily over the campagna for that feather of white smoke which would appear ere long around a distant mountain-curve. It was a superb October day, warm, still, and richly colored, and all the scene was swathed and softened in a thick silvery haze like incense-smoke. The vigne, dotted through with many-colored groups, the roads threading the plains like veins in marble, the processions of figures with baskets on their heads bring-

ing in the last of the grapes, the yellow shaven wheat-fields, the mountains, the forests, all lay in that softened sunshine like a poet's dream of the past. It looked remote and splendid, like a romance of chivalry. No mediæval tale could be more bright and vague. The hill-topped cities showed only a dark profile of tower and wall against the pale and shining background. The sky was all a dreamy silver, melting to a wide bright sapphire overhead.

It was a scene to charm a poet; but this poet scarcely saw it. She was thinking anxiously about her daughter, whose whole future, sh believed, might depend on the issue of this new connection. The would not be unkind to Aurora,—that she did not fear,—but migh to they not be unsympathizing? Might they not misunderstand her? She trembled for Aurora. If any one looked at her, she thought the y If any one smiled, she smiled back. She said but were her friends. little, yet that was not reserve. The mother hardly knew what it was-The girl's emotions, springing ever outward, seemed to curl back upon herself, fountain-like, covering her with light and expression. Her eyes spoke, her whole form was eloquent. There was an immensity of life in that soul which shone, and so often shone, in silence. Sometimes she did not talk even to her mother; but, when she did, the countess found that her little reserves and secrets were the most in nocent and transparent possible. They hid themselves as children hide sometimes, when you come upon them in quiet nooks, silent and smiling, and wonder why they are there, and they cannot tell you. seemed, indeed, that in her silence Aurora was sometimes wonderi at herself, not knowing what she was, yet untroubled and unafrat No doubt she was sensitive. Her brightness clouded as easily as the brightness of a polished metal when it is breathed upon, and it cleare as quickly, too.

If Aurora were a poetess, her mother thought, there would be recompense. She would be sure to suffer, certainly, but equally sure to enjoy. Like the beautiful young Joseph, Rachel's son, she would be hated for her dreams and for the love she won, though she should never dream their sheaves bowed down to hers, still less that the sun and the moon and the seven stars made obeisance to her. And of those who praised, the greater number would never understand that she was a creature ever apart from them, with her second sight, her

second hearing of a music dumb to them, and all her golden weights and measures to try life by. They would have their presuming little smiles and criticisms because she did not put off her sandals and step down among them in their meaner hours, her recitation done.

But, with all this, what a compensation would be hers! And what defence! She would have no Medusa-headed shield to strike her foes to silence; but there was scorn. "The scorn of genius is the most boundless and the most arrogant of all scorn." It is true, as the genius who penned the words well knows. Aurora could mock the mockers.

And there was delight. Hers would be the "Open sesame!" to the garden of jewels and to the sympathy of comprehending souls.

Oh, let the girl but be a poet, her nature pulsing on a creative artery that had caught its human beating from that first divine illimitable motion when the infinite Heart, overflowing, awoke from its unshared bliss and asked for love in place of solitude, and made many haters for the sake of fewer lovers, and let blasphemers live that it might hear the sweet sound of answering defence and praise; let the girl but be a poet of that antique line that, flying the false gods through dark ways of the centuries, bursts upward to the light like Arethusa, catches and holds a rainbow for the world to see and touch its airy glory,—God's poet, with a sword beside the lyre, not a mere rhymer not worth hating,—and welcome be the cross beneath such crown. It was the cross and crown of the "sweet Psalmist," who fought and sang, and God "delighted in him."

While she longed there in the silence, a song rose up about the house from without on the cliff-side. It was a graceful love-song of the People, sung in the people's way, with the long-drawn ending note, and the soft patois, and certain little rustic graces translated into art. The song told the sorrows of two lovers whose parents had torn them a part to wed each to a richer spouse. At the first sound of it the countess turned with a swift smile, looked toward the stair that came up to the terrace, and listened, still smiling.

The song grew fainter as the singer entered the house, burst clearly from open window after window in the rooms below, was almost lost in intervening walls, then slowly grew articulate up the stairs.

Presently, above the gray stone floor appeared the top of a basket

of grapes, black and white piled among leaves, and paused there with a long, sweet cadence from the singer. Then a new stanza began, and with it appeared the rest of the basket and a line of the living caryatid which supported it. There was a white brow shadowed by the basketrim and hanging leaves and low-pressed hair, and two dark, smooth curves of eyebrows, and a pair of starry eyes beneath. were serious at first, but smiled on meeting the eyes that watched them. Then the whole face appeared, brilliant and lovely with a superb peachbeauty of curve and color, with white teeth showing like pearls dropped in a rose, and a white throat in a foam of creamy laces. that followed was a little above medium height, and scarcely so slender as an English or American girl's would be at nineteen years of age; clad in a dress of gold-flowered olive-green made without a crimp or flounce, with red and yellow wall-flowers looping the loose sleeves and hanging from the belt, and a bracelet of antique gold coins on each round arm.

Aurora Coronari!

She came forward with elastic, measured steps, like one "qui Junonis sacra ferret."

"Oh," cried her mother suddenly, "I will have a tableau vivant of a temple with girls for caryatids, holding up a cornice all of acanthus-leaves and twisted vines."

The girl lifted her arms and took the basket from her head, and the sunlight made a rush at the rich chestnut hair drawn loosely back in coils transfixed with a gilt spadone. "Mamma," she said, "I brought the grapes for you to see, they are so fine. I chose the best. It is fortunate that the Scotch signor comes to-day, for they must all be gathered. Every soul of them is ripe."

Seeing her face so bright, a sensitive stranger would have been surprised and touched on hearing the voice. It was soft and rich and almost tremulous, and hovered over a minor chord to which it dropped occasionally. She began to speak on the tone with which she had ceased to sing, and while she spoke lifted cluster after cluster of the fruit, some with round black globes dusted with azure bloom, others oval and honey-colored and musk-scented. She had set the basket on the parapet of the terrace, and the western sun shone through the edges of the fruit and gilded the leaves a little.

"I think, mamma, that they will be pleased with everything," she said, looking seriously at her mother for confirmation. "There seems to be nothing else to do."

"I hope that they may be pleased with you, my daughter," said the countess.

"Oh, they will," the girl responded easily. "It is impossible to know in what way till I see them; but they will be pleased."

There was no taint of vanity in her confidence. It was simply confidence in the goodness of those whom she meant to try to please.

"I do not doubt that you will try, my dear," the mother said, and stopped. It was bitter to teach distrust to this trusting nature. She doubted, indeed, if Aurora were capable of learning the lesson. "Sometimes people are not willing to be pleased," she went on. "These people promise well, and I hope for the best. There is little to fear from the signor; but I do fear the signorina. It is the woman, not the man, who makes the house uncomfortable to an inmate."

"I am not at all afraid of that, mamma. I feel that I shall love her. I love her already, and am longing to see her. We shall be different, of course; but that may be an advantage. She will be fair and cool, like other English girls I know. I shall set her on a pedestal, like a statue, and kneel before her. I am going to love her next to you."

The mother smiled. The picture of two girls united and loving, sharing the same pursuits, sympathizing with and confiding in each other, was very pleasant to her. But what if Aurora should be disappointed? What if her love should be chilled and her confidence rejected?

"I hope that it may be so, my child," she said. "But do not expect too much; for that would only lead to disappointment. You will always find friends; but you will also find much that is not friendly or sympathizing. Try to reserve yourself a little, and wait for people to prove themselves before you trust them."

The girl thought a moment over this lesson. "But, mamma," she said presently, "what if every one should do so? Then no one would trust anybody, and people would stand cold and waiting and suspecting. Perhaps the person might be waiting to see if I would prove myself before she would trust me. Wouldn't it be better for me to run the

risk? Of course—" she paused a moment, and her face clouded over—" of course it would hurt me to be disappointed; but—" She did not finish the sentence, but stood with that shadow and a look of trouble in her face.

The mother's eyes were tearful. "Oh, my dove," she cried, "I wish I had some safe and peaceful ark to hide you in where pain should never reach you!"

Aurora turned quickly toward her. "Dear mamma!" she said, and, bending forward, took the two sallow cheeks between her rosy palms, and kissed the face in a cross, from forehead to chin, and on one cheek after the other as she released them, kissing and caressing as one would a child, or as a stronger would reassure a weaker; then smiling, with one hand on her mother's shoulder, "The dove did not find the olivebranch in the ark, but out in a ruined world."

"Do you know," she added, standing back, and lifting her eyes lightly, with the veiled look of one who sees a vision, "I can see the future as in a thick mist? There is something glorious in it. I seem about to reach a star. Sometimes I feel as if I were reaching it. I do not know how to express myself: I cannot speak. I am so full of happiness it makes my heart ache sometimes. I envy the beautiful rocket that can rush up into the skies and burst all into colored stars. I have always dreamed of flying. When I was a little child, I dreamed it; and the same year after year. Some danger always threatened me, there were wild beasts that came about me, and the air grew dark; but I rose up and floated by in safety. I dreamed it a thousand times. At last I knew that I was dreaming; but I still believed that the flying was real. And I thought, 'I will remember how I do it, so as to fly when I wake up.' But when I waked I could not remember. Then the dream came again, like a lesson, forever the same. It was a silent dream. No one was then in sight or sound, and my soul rose up, all of it, and not enough was left for speaking. At last, after a good many years, I remembered; and then I never had the dream again.

"It was so: I pressed my hands together as if praying, pressed with all my force, and looking upward. And I drew in a full, full breath out of some upper air, and sent my soul upward; and my body followed. That seems nonsense, does it not? Yet if I could tell you

how I aspired, you would see that one might rise in that way without wings. That breath I drew in, full and strong, seemed to fan some inward fire that broke into a flame and burnt off instantly the cord that holds me to the earth. Oh, if I could but know! Mamma, it was not a mere idle dream that came to teach me and went when I was taught. What god is this who gives me his breath to rise on? What heavenly spirit draws me up so on a kiss?"

The mother did not speak. She only gazed at her daughter, and waited till this breeze of passion passed.

Aurora sighed, and melted downward,—eyes, face, and arms. And then she laughed a little, seeing her mother's serious face. "It may be but a dream," she said, her voice still somewhat breathless. "Yet it shall not always be all a dream. You will see, mamma, that I shall fly one day. I remember and try. Perhaps I must wait till the wild beasts come to devour me. But one day I shall fly."

She laughed, and stood on tiptoe, and pressed her upraised hands together.

"Keep your dreams to tell to me!" the mother exclaimed, in a sort of terror. "Fly, yes! fly in the beautiful world that is yours; but keep your delights hidden from others. They are too sacred for common ears. Ah! my bird of dawn, the world is cold!"

Aurora turned and flung her arms wide, north and south, to all the bright horizon. "I will warm it!" she exclaimed.

The mother's heart was thrilled. Could anything resist that pure and ardent nature? Could any glance turn coldly from those tender eyes that shone each with its star? Could any one refuse to listen to those rosy lips whose every tone was music? Alas! she knew the world, and she remembered Rachel's son: "And they hated him yet more for his dreams and for his words." Yet warning was all in vain. She must let life teach the girl its own bitter lesson.

Aurora turned brightly from embracing the world: "Did you hear the song I learned this morning from Mariù, mamma? It is lovely. It is like a song that grew itself. There is one stanza more. It tells how the two lovers jumped off a high precipice into the sea. I have changed it to this place, and made them jump from the Gola down on to the tree-tops. Their souls are out of their bodies before they strike the trees, and the olive-branches bear up softly their dead bodies."

"Sing it to me," said her mother.

Aurora sang as a bird sings, with all her body. The white throat swelled, the hands were lifted, she moved lightly with a cadenced step. And then she laughed, and took up her basket of grapes again, and they went down-stairs together. The sorrows of love touched her imagination as lightly as the cloud-shadow touches the earth it passes over between two sunbursts.

They went to the dining-room. There was no afternoon sun in this room, which looked out through an arched window and a balcony to the court, the Gola, and the town. It might easily be a gloomy chamber, except at morning when the sun shone in; but they had illuminated it with color here and there. The table was set on a large square of bright carpet in the centre of the room. The large, dark fireplace was filled with yellow wall-flowers, and a gay-colored drapery had been thrown over an arm-chair near the window. The ceiling and walls had once been frescoed, but nothing remained but a few blotches of color here and there. There were large presses, sideboards, and credences of oak, walnut, and intarsio, and three beautiful old carved chairs were placed at the table. The countess wore the black veil which answered for bonnet, and meant to go away as soon as the travellers arrived.

The table was set with Japanese ware and some lovely white old silver, and the cloth was a marvel of needle-work and old point-lace around the border. This table-equipage belonged to Aurora, and was an heirloom in the family. It represented, indeed, almost her entire possessions. The countess had preferred to leave to the new-comers the task of making such purchases, and had, perhaps, a secret thought that her daughter's position in the house might not be injured by this little display of wealth. It was not every one who in these days could have table-cloths bordered with old knotted point and old Japanese ware enough to set a table for a dozen persons, as the countess had. The display was, indeed, extravagant; but they thought nothing too good for those whom they were ready to call benefactors. Besides, Giovanna had been installed dragon of the porcelain, would wash it with her own hands, and put it away in its cases after dinner.

Aurora arranged her grapes in the centre-piece of the table; her mother went out into the balcony and broke off a handful of the large, fragrant pinks that grew there head downward, and laid them by the plate which the stranger lady was to occupy.

From the vaulted ceiling hung a copper chain and ring, in which was a large acorn-shaped copper lamp for olive oil. The double doors into the drawing-room stood wide open, and the sunshine flooding that room was creeping toward the threshold of its dimmer neighbor.

The last touch given, "It is lovely, mamma," Aurora said.

"Yes; but what a pity that the paintings are all rubbed off the walls!" the countess replied.

"Do you think so, mamma? It seems to me that one can imagine so much, seeing only those faint clouds of color. One looks, and all the story paints itself afresh."

"For instance," said the mother, smiling. "Imagine something for me." She was charmed with her daughter's new communicativeness.

Aurora touched a fleck of color on a space in the wall where there was a confusion of vague spots: "Francesco Ferruccio, Commissary-General of the Republic of Florence! He is a hero for women to weep over when he dies, and for brave men to stand uncovered in the presence of. He is loved and honored in the flowery republic. He has more power than any man in his position ever before had in a re-Public. When he fell, Florence fell. This is his last struggle and his last triumph. This is the surrender of Volterra, which he has retaken from the enemy. All the world is against Florence,-Spain, with the Prince of Orange up from Naples, Charles V., Clement VII.,—all against Florence. By force or by betrayal, all the outlying fortresses have been taken, and the enemy has closed around the city. They have been driven back; but that there were traitors in the city, they would have been conquered. And now Ferruccio has retaken Volterra, and they come out to surrender themselves. Here he is! He stands outside the city, opposite the gate. He is armed from head to foot, but his visor is up. His right hand holds the drawn sword with its Point against the earth; his left arm is swung back, holding the shield reversed. Before him stand three men grouped and bent forward, all extending toward him a gold plate on which are the keys of the city. This yellow blotch is the robe of one. A blue scarf hangs over his shoulder, from which a red hat hangs down his back. The man next him wears a green robe,—here is a speck of it left,—and the last a red brown. They look up at him beseechingly. Two soldiers stand behind them, bareheaded also, their faces bowed, like culprits. They do not dare to raise their eyes. Behind them are the gray city walls, with their towers and their cannon. Behind their general the Florentines stand and look with disdain, half over their shoulders, at the conquered ones. They hold the red banner of Florence with its golden lilies. A branch of them is visible yet. The wounded and dead lie all around, with broken swords and lauces and casques. Farther on, the battle is raging yet. The Florentines are so much in earnest they cannot stop all at once."

"Brava!" said the mother softly as the improvisatrice paused. But, like the Florentines, Aurora was so much in earnest that she could not stop all at once.

"He was a brave man, mamma," she said, turning as from a real scene. "His triumph was short. There was a traitor in Florence, Malatesta Baglioni. There was another battle, and the help that should have been sent out did not come. Ferruccio—how well he was named!—fine iron—fought like ten men, though he had a fever when he went into the field. Orsini was brave, yet he proposed to surrender; but Ferruccio said no. He only rested, leaning on his lance a little, when he knew that the Prince of Orange had fallen. Then to battle again. He was wounded from head to foot, was sick and faint with pain and loss of blood. And at last he was taken and led before the opposing general, a vile Calabrian, Fabrizio Maramaldo. This man with the bitter name abused and insulted and killed him. 'You kill a dead man,' said the hero."

- "My child!" the mother exclaimed, seeing Aurora wipe her eyes, "this is all past centuries ago. They sleep."
- "Ah, mamma!" the girl said, sighing, "heroism has no bounds. It was not born into time, but into eternity."
- "Brava!" said the countess again, and embraced her daughter. "I will find a hero—a second Ferruccio—for you."
- "And now let us go and see about the dinner," said the singer of martial deeds. "I want to see if Mariù found some more partridges. There were only three. And Chiara promised to send some of her little brown figs. Forestieri like fresh figs."

They went down to the great dusky kitchen,—dusky in its corners

ren now, though a wide bar of sunlight was shot through it from its is window toward the west. Copper dishes, pans, mugs, pitchers, id great water-vases gleamed with a rich, dim lustre along the walls; e long dark table in the centre, crossing the sunshine, was like a lette filled with colors. A wooden bowl was heaped with varied lads, the gleaming green and silver of endive and the tender yellowite of lettuce; there was a heap of birds in a fluffy mass of colors, l, gray, green, and gold, with all their poor little feet drawn up, and eir soft heads dropped, and some with their bills still holding the rry or seed they nipped when the shot caught them, and a great cok of Parma cheese, a solid dull amber, and a branch of laurelves to put between the birds on the spit, and a basket of fresh eggs, ir white tinted with a faint flesh-color, and a few large lemons for salad, and a prim basket of figs.

Giovanna stood before the great cavernous chimney, with its wood at one end for roasting and its little charcoal-furnaces at the other.

Twide shoulders in their white blouse loomed between the blaze the surrounding shadows, her braided black hair shone in the t. She turned a red face at sound of Aurora's voice.

Oh! here are the figs, and I must have some ferns to lay them Can you spare Mariù a minute, Giovanna?"

it had been Gian, he would have been crushed at once; for anna in the heat of culinary composition was as impatient of ruption as any other artist; but it was not so easy to snub the s. Moreover, Aurora was likely to be the real head of the house r as the servants were concerned, and the means of communicabetween them and the higher powers. Yes, she could spare u five minutes, but no more.

Mariù, fly and bring me a handful of ferns!" the young lady said. u will find them by leaning over the broken places in the wall of Jola." The girl was beating anchovies with oil in a mortar. She erately set the mortar down without a word, and deliberately ed out of the room with very solid steps. Flying was not numlamong her accomplishments. Yet when the two ladies were way up the stairs again, Aurora with her basket of little brown the mountain-girl appeared in the hall with a feathery armful of

"They will be pretty in the west windows," the countess said, and took them all.

"But I must have a big grape-leaf for the bottom of the dish, Mariù," Aurora called out.

Mariù solemnly brought the grape-leaf.

The figs arranged, the countess looked at her watch. "It is almost time," she said, with a sudden seriousness, and, taking her daughter by the hand, led her away to the chamber that Aurora was to occup. It was a pleasant southwestern one, and had no ornaments as yet. From a motive of delicacy, they had preferred to wait till the new comers had made their own rooms look more home-like before adding anything unnecessary to this. There was only a crucifix and a little marble Madonna in a shrine on the wall at the head of the bed.

The countess drew her daughter down beside her on the prie-die and, folding her hands, prayed aloud for her, that she might dwell under that roof in peace and friendship, and that no misfortune might overtake her there.

As she listened to the earnest, tremulous voice, Aurora bowed her head to her mother's shoulder, and put her arms around her, and knelt thus intertwined with her while the prayer rose as from them both. When the countess paused, she whispered, "Ask that I may do they duty, mamma, and make myself worthy of their confidence and respect."

The mother repeated the petition, and paused again.

"Ask that I may make a great many people happier," came in soft, prompting breath.

Again the mother lifted the daughter's prayer on her own vo

And yet again a whisper rose from her shoulder: "Ask that I mever be separated from my mother, and that she may live as long I do."

The mother made a wiser prayer,—that she might be spared mayears to her child, and that she should at last leave her only who some faithful friend would be near to console her.

"And now, mamma, thank Him for everything."

The mother, with a full heart, began her thanksgiving, not for the selfish gains alone, but for the gains of others, for the beauty of eart

and heaven, and for the glory of God; and at every pause the soft "Si; grazie!" answered from her side.

They were in heaven.

At first they did not hear the voice that called them; but a second call reached their ears: "Signora Contessa, they are coming!"

They rose, clasped each other in a close and silent embrace, wiped the dews of heaven from their eyes, and went down-stairs, hand in hand, and out on the steps.

A carriage was coming through the Gola, with Gian beside the driver, a pile of baggage on the roof, and two porters from the town following on foot. It drew up at the steps, and Glenlyon alighted, took off his hat to the two courtesying ladies on the step, and gave his hand to Aurelia, who stepped quickly down and met the countess and her daughter with a very pretty cordiality.

"Your kindness makes it seem like coming home," she said in French to the mother; and, with a smiling glance at Aurora, "Mademoiselle will teach me how to thank you in your own beautiful language."

It was very prettily done; and of the little audience who listened momentarily to her, no one was more gratified than Glenlyon.

The two girls paused an instant, looking at each other. In the eyes of both could be read pleasure and admiration,—in the English face a more reserved friendliness, in the Italian a wistful interrogation. Aurelia extended her hand; Aurora stepped forward with a soft, swift grace and took it.

"Mademoiselle, you are welcome to Italy," she said in French, and repeated the words in Italian.

"Mademoiselle, you are welcome to my home," responded Aurelia.

The countess, with the fluent grace of her countrywomen, poured forth a hundred compliments. They all went up-stairs together, leaving Gian and his assistants in an ecstasy of argument and gesticulation over the baggage.

from an injured porter whom Gian was taking rather a high tone with.

Pert little blonde Jenny, their London servant, had come with them.

Mariù took her in hand, forcibly relieved her of parasols and bags,
and solemnly beckoned her to follow. Jenny went up-stairs behind

her companion with a very amused face, her somewhat supercilious glance scanning the short and enormously full skirt, the stiff blue corsets with a bright ribbon-bow on the top of each narrow side-piece almost even with the shoulder, and the gayly-flowered little shawl gathered down from the neck in a cluster of pleats, the point pinned tightly to the waist-line, where the white apron-strings crossed it.

Glenlyon and Aurelia had been shown their rooms, and then the countess took an immediate leave of them. "I will come some other time to offer my services," she said; "but now I will not intrude. I do not forget, signore, that this is your birthplace." And she slipped away almost before they knew.

Two men came up-stairs, each with a trunk on his head and a hope of large backsheesh filling his soul.

"I'lease sit down and let me take off your wrappings, mademoiselle," Aurora said. "You must be tired. Sit where you can see the window. I hope that the view may please you."

Aurelia sank somewhat wearily into a chair, and, with a touch as light as a butterfly, the other removed her bonnet and shawl.

- "What lovely hair you have!" Aurora said. "I am named for the morning; but it is you who resemble it."
 - "Aurora is morning red," said Aurelia, smiling, "and you are rosy."
- "And you are morning gold," returned the other. "Now tell me what I can do for you, or send you, and I will go."
- "What dingy walls, miss!" said Jenny, with a shiver, when the two were alone.
- "It is picturesque," remarked Aurelia, glancing about. "Most picturesque places are dirty." She glanced up at the ceiling, where was a flock of cupids with wreaths of flowers, and her clear eyes detected dust. "I must have the ceilings swept, and curtains to the bed," she said.

Jenny, full of disdain for this strange house, proposed to ask at once for a long duster, but was checked decidedly. "We must not seem to be dissatisfied with anything," her mistress said. "These people have been very kind. Remember, we are not in England."

Glenlyon was alone in his room, his door closed. He felt a trembling in his hands as he prepared for dinner, yet did not stop for memories. His dead lay where the ocean keeps its dead, in a calm deep,

far out of the reach of storms, and the few floating fragmentary memories were but the scattered threads of vesture they no longer wore. The image his mind had kept of his mother was only a presence of fond love, and a shadowy shape with a red scarf bound on the head. Some unusual adornment had perhaps caught his childish eyes, blind to her usual aspect, and so fixed itself forever as his only picture of her. There was a portrait which he had never seen, shut up all these years, and now in the closed chamber next to him.

He remembered her once standing in the window of this very room, when he had come in full of some childish grief, and how she turned and held her arms out to him. And yet again—was it a memory or a fancy?—she seemed to sing a child to sleep with a soft lullaby.

It was all strange, and, as he thought with a dull pain, alien to him. The mother's love must press yet longer ere the childish heart will take the print of it. And perhaps, he thought, the mother-love had not had time to make itself remember. She might float about in her immortal youth and think this old man from beyond the sea a strange intruder, and that long-lost infant be to her but a drop of dew lost in the sands of time.

Outside the windows stretched unchanged the first earthly scene on which his human eyes had rested. Its plain and mountain, rock and favine, knew no decay. They made his threescore and fifteen years seem but a passing vapor. At this moment he had no thought of their beauty. To him they were stern and immutable, or, worse than stern, indifferent. Only his relations with them were changed.

"The orbit of man's life," he thought, "is never a circle: it is a spiral leading up or down. We never really go back again."

He had no wish to go back. It seemed to him that he had no wish for anything. The inevitable pressed upon him with a cold and Paralyzing touch. In some dusky by-path of his being his soul had come upon the Fates.

There was a light tap at the door, and Aurelia entered.

"Can I do anything for you?" she asked.

No; he would come out in a moment, and they would have dinner.

But how are you pleased with the place?" he inquired.

fortable; but that is easily remedied. I think that after a few days

we may have it looking quite homelike. You will want an easier arm-chair here."

- "And the young lady?" he added, rather anxiously.
- "She is very charming," Aurelia said. "She and her mother are like two birds. But I do not know what to call her. They call her the Contessina here. It is odd. She is not a countess."
- "Call her Mademoiselle, or Signorina. It is the custom here to call the daughter of a countess Contessina."

Aurelia had assumed the dress of cream-colored woollen gauze with pale-blue borders in which Robert McLellan had wished to paint her as an angel. With all her delicate coloring, she looked quite angelic as she entered the salone. Aurora stood in a western window, blooming with the last sun-rays. She came forward at once.

- "Has mademoiselle found all that she wants? Can I do anything for her?"
- "Nothing, thanks. You and the countess have already been most kind. I am afraid that you have given yourselves too much trouble."
- "Our only trouble was to know how much we had better do," Aurora said. "We feared not to suit you, as we had no express orders. Mamma left many things which she hopes you will allow her to help you about when you shall have decided just what you want."
- "What there may be to do, we will do together," Aurelia said kindly. "And we can ask your mother's advice."

Her companion looked at her a moment in wistful silence, then said softly, "I hope that you will be content with me, mademoiselle."

- "I am so already," was the reply, very gently spoken. "And I hope that you will be content with me."
- "I shall be more than content!" said Aurora, almost in a whisper, and stopped.

There was a momentary pause. Something of the bashfulness of undeclared lovers had fallen between them.

Then Aurelia held out her hand, and the other took it; and so, hand in hand, they went to the window, and stood there, looking out, and thinking of each other, till, after a moment, Aurelia turned, with a smile, and they leaned softly together, and kissed each other on the cheek,—a rose and lily blown together by a summer breeze.

CHAPTER XI.

SETTLING INTO PLACE.

They went in to dinner, and Aurora explained the elegance of the table, which Aurelia at once observed. Her mother's father had been a collector of old Japanese ware at a time when very few persons had begun to think of it as valuable. He had employed several men to search it out for him in the country-houses about, and had himself frequented old shops and public fairs in the great cities.

"Mamma says that he bought this for five soldi," she said, touching a little blue-and-white bowl from which she had just been sprinkling grated Parma cheese into her soup. "Now it could not be had for ten seudi. He found it in the Campo di Fiori, in Rome."

"Why, can one make such bargains?" asked Aurelia, with great interest.

"Oh, not now. People have learned that they have sold treasures for nothing, and now they go to the opposite extreme of setting an enormous price on all the old rubbish they possess. The moment one looks at a thing in their houses they immediately conclude that it is of value; and they are very cunning in detecting a desire to possess it. While they know nothing whatever of the value of such objects, their penetration enables them to guess it from the desire shown by a purchaser to possess it. No pretended indifference will deceive them."

Glenlyon left the two girls to talk, and himself remained silent. He knew nothing of ancient porcelain, and cared nothing for it; and the idea of bargains made in such a way was displeasing to him. It only added an item more to the oppressive, mountainous sense of a crowd of human beings preying upon and deceiving each other, destroying all mutual trust and sympathy, each one rejoicing in a gain which is another's loss.

The conversation turned presently to the Cagliostri; and, having been instructed by her mother, Aurora intimated that the duchess would probably expect an early visit from them. She was at home every evening informally.

"We will go to-morrow evening," Glenlyon said.

When they returned to the drawing-room, they found a cluster of candles burning on the centre-table. The windows had been fastened, but the shutters were open, and disclosed a softly-shadowed landscape, where everything was faintly visible like objects sunk in dark transparent waters, while a scattered host of large stars burned above the yet orange-colored horizon, and a flickering path of intense silver running along the undulating surface of the southern mountains told that the moon was rising in the unseen east. All these varied lights and shadows melted into each other, forming a new element which the alchemy of nature endowed with the power of enchantment.

Glenlyon took a paper from the table and seemed to read. The two girls looked out of the window, whispering their comments on the scene, till Jenny came in with the tea, which brought them to a familiar household chat. Aurora had never drunk tea, and wished to know how to make it. She studied the niceties of its preparation, and tried to appreciate the flowery Pekoe which Aurelia proudly displayed, a present made to Glenlyon by some friend just returned from the East. The English girl set her flowery Pekoe against the Italian's Japanese porcelain.

"It is seldom to be bought, and then only at a very high price," she said. "One has to give ten shillings a pound for it, if one has the good fortune to find it at all. Only once in a while a small lot of it is sent over in some cargo of tea, and then it is all done up in pound packages. The Russians usually catch it out of the market. They are great lovers of tea, and they are very rich. See, now that is steeped, what tiny little stems and leaves it is made of. We do the drink this every day, you know; but I am now celebrating our arrival

"You must give the duchess a cup of it when she comes to see you :
Aurora said. "She also makes tea. They have many English cut's
toms. The duke's mother was an English lady. And, oh! I have
an idea! Wait a moment!"

She ran away to her own room, and presently returned with a small box, or casket, made of a pistachio-green, semi-transparent glass, bound with gilt bronze bands, and fastened with a tiny lock. "This shall be the tea-caddy for your flowery tea," she said. "This can be used when there are visitors. Is it not pretty?"

The two pretty heads close together, and the fair hands and arms interlaced, they carefully poured the tea into its new receptacle, making soft little exclamations at the beauty of it.

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Glenlyon looked at them with a pleased smile over the top of his paper, but said nothing.

Then they spoke of their school-days, and of their favorite studies, Aurelia seeming to have finished her studies, Aurora to have only begun hers. In a definite, orderly way, the English girl seemed to fold and lay aside like outgrown garments these changing periods of her life, while the Italian looked upon such changes as a constantlyenlarging view of a whole, later-acquired lights explaining earlier uncertainties, and all pressing forward to some unknown solution. But, neither having any theory, their differences being the effect of a difference of nature and intuition, they were scarcely aware that they did not agree perfectly in anything, and found the variety in their views interesting as variety, but otherwise of trifling importance, and most certainly no ground for discord. It might be observed, however, that Aurelia's opinions were more clearly defined and reasoned out, and that she was more firm and positive in expressing them, while Aurora, after some ardent proposition, which she advanced without dreaming that it was controvertible, faltered into silence on being ever so gently challenged to explain.

Hearing Aurora say that she had always detested grammar and rhetoric, which she could not understand, and that she had loved mathematics above all things, Glenlyon looked up with an expression of interest and surprise.

"I understand your being confounded by grammar and rhetoric," he said. "We do not see that which is a part of ourselves. You are evidently a mistress of both those arts, and you must have been so early taught to speak well that it became a second nature. But I am surprised to hear you say that the mathematics pleased you."

"Are you?" she replied, surprised in her turn. "Why,"—hesitating, as if to know how to express herself,—"mathematics alone leads always to sure and lasting results. One does not have to go back ward there. It is all progress. Besides, in following out mathematical laws you are going in the same direction as the supernatural laws, because it is the path of order and of harmony. I always had

a sense of hearing music when I was on the way to solving a problem; and when it was solved, there it was forever! Then every little success was so much more than it seemed. I touched the perfect figure which answered the question, and it was like touching a note in an organ, when you know that the octaves answer up and down to the very limits of music. Just above my solution was a higher truth, and above that a higher, answering each other, till they reached God himself. It seems to me that when one touches any truth, one is for the time in tune with heaven."

She paused, and blushed. "I am, perhaps, talking nonsense, signore," she said. "I do not know how to explain myself, for no one ever explained these things to me. In the convent my studies did not go far in the classes; all beyond I had to pursue by myself, and the nuns did not think it necessary that I should know any more. I knew that truth was there, but I had to follow it as a child follows a new path. I saw only tiny fragments, but I am sure that they are all parts of a whole. The nuns said that I made a medley of contradictory things; but I think they did not understand me."

"No," said Glenlyon, "they are not contradictory. They are simply too large to grasp. You have, apparently, an intuitive perception of a philosophical truth,—the relation between mathematics and metaphysics, to which you add spirituality, and so complete the mystic trinity. There are truths which the highest intellects can see only by flashes, which dazzle for a moment across the abysses of the unknown."

"Oh," said Aurora, enchanted to have some one speak seriously to her of such things for the first time in her life without condemning those glimmering lights in her mind as will-o'-the-wisps, "I am almost glad that you say the mind cannot grasp the whole, for it is a torment to try, and it is out of the question not to try when success seems possible. I will wait."

"Till when?" asked Glenlyon.

"Till the next life," she replied, looking at him with a wonder at his question in her bright transparent eyes.

She dropped her glance again, and smiled a moment in silence over the help he had given her.

"The advantage of your system of octaves," Glenlyon said, with a

; "is that you will not despise the lowly, since you may find key-note in some very humble place."

despise nothing," she replied half absently, occupied with her Then, with animation, "I found out so many things I suppose everybody else knows. They became clear to me as lied. They opened out like daisies beside the way. I found be equilateral triangle, which is the figure of God, is perfection , while the circle is perfection in motion. If such a triangle be cast out at white heat in an orbit, it would whirl itself into 3, and, resting, it would naturally subside into the triangular shape But," she added, with a sudden bashful feeling that she was z too much, "pardon my egotism. No one ever spoke to me h things before, and it makes me forget myself. It has put my all in confusion." And she turned to Aurelia and began to and arrange caressingly the little netted shawl on her shoulders. nlyon mused a moment. He found something charming in this e that went fanning with her bright wings along the inflexible of science, rejoicing in their inflexibility, and ever expecting to nat Jacob's ladder of ringing octaves answering upward from newly-discovered Bethel.

glanced at Aurelia presently, and she rose and brought him a Bible from a side-table. It was their custom to read a portion Scriptures and say the Our Father together every night. Tofor the first time, he hesitated. "I should like to have her s, Aurelia," he said, in English; "and she cannot, unless we some concession. If you are willing, bring me the Latin-and-1 Douay out of my room, and she shall read in it."

ile Aurelia went for the book, he explained his wishes to a, and found her less reluctant than he had expected. "I have read the Bible; but mamma says that it is beautiful," she said. In no reason why I should not join you. But what am I to read?" she asked, as Aurelia opened the volume at random and it before her. "What is the situation?"

relia had opened at the prayer of Solomon at the dedication temple, in the second book of Chronicles. Standing with her on the open page, she described, in a cool, exact manner, the lors of the golden temple, the crowd that filled the courts and

swarmed around the brazen scaffold in the midst, whereon the king had mounted, the royal priest himself kneeling with his arms upraised to heaven, and the dazzling cloud that filled the holy place.

Then Aurora read the prayer in her own sweet-flowing language, 80 that it seemed to be a song, with its ever-recurring "then hear thou from heaven," as each need of the people of God and the stranger within their gates was forcseen. As she read, her own hands were unconsciously raised, and, instead of a dry repetition of words uttered thousands of years backward in the past, the words became an impassioned prayer in the present. Her voice grew tremulous at the last invocation, "Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into thy resting-place, thou, and the ark of thy strength;" and, having finished, she covered her face with her hands and burst into tears.

"You dear, sensitive creature!" said Aurelia, putting an arm around her.

"Is it not sublime?" exclaimed Aurora, hastily dashing the tears from her cheeks. "Mamma has told me; but I did not know what it was. She says that Solomon and his father David were poets, and that David's voice was sweeter than a lute, so that he charmed the evil spirit out of Saul; and that when Saul hated him, and woul have killed him, David had only to speak one gentle word, and the ker burst into tears and loved him again. She said that Solomon make had a voice like his father's, because he was great of heart him. Mamma says that the voice tells what the heart is. She said too, that Solomon was as tall as Adam, who was as tall as a palm-trand that he had golden hair. Oh, I must read every word that told of him!"

And, having poured forth her enthusiasm, Aurora sighed, as smiled, and sank back in her chair, a little ashamed of having said much. "I have never talked so much in any day in all my life as this day," she thought. "My silence is broken up all at once, his the dam across a river."

"You can read it all at your leisure," Glenlyon said kindly, the smilingly added, "You can admire him as much as you like, you an the queen of Sheba." He drew the book toward him, and turned the leaves. Decidedly, he thought, this girl was interesting. She would prevent his being dull. He found a place, and read: "And he spake

thousand proverbs; and his songs were a thousand and five; he spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes."

You see," said Glenlyon, closing the book, "that Solomon must been a very fascinating man. But you must also remember that Il into idolatry at last, and we have no record that God forgave

)h, pardon me, signore, but God must have forgiven him. ou see that in this very prayer he asks pardon prophetically for is Besides, Dante saw him in Paradise." Aurora uttered the fords with the air of one proposing a conclusive argument; and bly most young Italians just out of school would have thought it For Dante may be called the Bible of the Italians. Divine Comedy is studied in their schools as no literary or res work whatever is studied in any English-speaking school; boys quote it as no English-speaking boy quotes either the or Shakespeare; orators would think a discourse unfinished if lid not cap some climax with a verse from Dante; and when in h one sees the preacher ascend the pulpit on some grand occasion, ild be safe to wager a large sum that he will not descend therewithout having strengthened an argument or pointed an arrow ack with a quotation from the dark-browed visionary who taught how to speak.

ile we have been thinking of Dante, our little family of three coelt and said the Our Father together in French, have bidden ther good-night, and separated.

ry slept, or, waking, heard through the solemn silence of night proach of the future, which the soul hears as the sound of many in the waked with another day, finding everything more ful than before, the travellers letting slip a little more of Engand taking on a little more of Italy. Jenny superintended the ration of breakfast, to the stupefaction of the whole household, instead of sending cups of coffee on trays with a roll to each saw itself called on to prepare a table as for colexione, and boil eggs and fish and ham. What monsters were these Inglesi, would seat themselves to such a table when they were just out of

bed! Aurora took her cup of black coffee and crust of bread at this wonderful table, resisting all persuasions to eat more. The room was now full of sunshine.

Then they went down to see the vigna before the grapes should be gathered. Some men and women had been called, and were now waiting in the court, where Glenlyon had ordered coffee and bread to be given them.

Aurelia dropped her handkerchief on the stair, and smilingly thanked Giovanna, who hastened to pick it up for her.

- "The duchess never thanks a servant," remarked Aurora.
- "I am accustomed to being civil to them," Aurelia replied rather stiffly.
- "They do not respect people who are civil to them," Aurora said.

 "They are accustomed to being commanded. If you thank them, they will think they are doing you a favor."
- "I should counsel you to be guided by her in these little matters," Glenlyon said to his ward, in English. "Don't try to introduce any new customs here. The people would either laugh or be offended. Nothing is so intolerant as Italian customs."
- "I am afraid it will take me a good while to learn not to thank servant," Aurelia replied.
- "You pay them," said Glenlyon, whose philanthropy did not any means admit that his footman should slap him on the should or his cook seat herself in the drawing-room. "You are bound to just to them; but I think experience will teach you that complimed are out of place between master or mistress and servant. It is a mequestion of duty, not of favor. Our Lord says the same. 'Doth thank that servant because he did the things that were command him? I trow not.' So he said. You will find it in St. Luke."

They went round to the western terrace and gazed at the view, fresh in the cool morning air, with long stretches of golden liggrowing along the plain, and every height wearing a sunny crown.

Then they went down and walked among the heavily-laden vine. The air was full of the harvest glory and triumph. The earth had down her best, and waited to be praised. All her treasures were outspressin silence under the smiling skies. Even the birds were silence. Neither Glenlyon nor his companions felt inclined to talk.

Presently the men and women came stepping down the narrow stairs with baskets on their heads. Gian, bursting with self-complacency, led them, and made them retire in a many-colored group into an angle of the rocks till the signori should have finished their inspection. They stood there, casting bright glances at the strangers, and showing their white teeth in smiles as they whispered to each other their comments.

"He looks like St. Peter," murmured one, gazing at Glenlyon.

"Yes," said Gian,-"like St. Peter in Vinculis."

He was thinking of the Moses he had once seen in that church.

All agreed that Aurelia was an angel. A pretty blonde woman may always calculate on being called an angel a good many times in her life.

Glenlyon felt a sweet breath of consolation and restfulness blowing over his soul. Nature so tenderly adopts the old and ruined in this caressing land that his bitter sense of being past all use was soothed by what he saw. A ruin may support a vine as well as a new trellis may, and the crumbling stones add a fairer charm to the flowers that bloom against them. It seemed to him that he might sink peacefully a way here under his own vine and fig-tree.

The people were set to work, and half the morning was spent in watching them carry up the grapes to the roof, where they were spread out to the sun. They would not be pressed till after a few days' drying.

Aurelia, assisted by Jenny, unpacked her own and her guardian's boxes and put their possessions in order. They had begun to feel a holiday charm in this life, which was so little like their dry Northern existence. They found something more genial and gracious in the air.

Then in the evening they went down to the palace, where they were expected.

CHAPTER XII.

NEW ACQUAINTANCES.

The villa life of the Cagliostri passed in the simplest manner. In the morning the duchess went to mass, wrote letters, and read novels, and the duke shut himself up in his study; in the afternoon they went out to drive in a large white-curtained carry-all which resembled an omnibus; and in the evening they were at home to whatever presentable person might be found in Sassovivo. At these receptions few persons were so happy as to have more than half a dozen words with their hostess, who sat sewing for the poor in the midst of a group of ladies of the town. The duke was more social, but usually passed the greater part of the evening playing chess with the sindaco of Sassovivo, Signor Passafiori. At ten, or half-past, the duchess rose, and everybody went away.

There was an hour between the drive and dinner, which was jestingly called the Conclave, because at that hour those clergymen whose habits did not allow them to go out in the evening were in the habit of coming to the palace. This was the most intimate of all the receptions.

The house had been for a week or two rather more gay than usual, for the eldest son, Don Leopoldo, Marquis of Vannosa, and his betrothed wife were there. His mother had succeeded in arranging a marriage between him and the American heiress, Miss Melville. She had not, however, succeeded in her plan to have the marriage solemnized at Christmas, the young lady remaining firm in her intention of waiting till Easter.

"I wish to see how Leopold will behave this winter," said the brideelect coolly. "If in six months he does not change his mind, I shall feel more secure for the future. I should not be pleased, duchessa, if the world were to see me neglected before the honey-moon is over."

The mother could make no defence of her son; and, besides, she stood somewhat in awe of this young lady, who knew her own value

to a farthing and had the air of condescending to become a present marchioness and a future duchess.

It was the hour before dinner, and nearly all the family were in the garden in front of the palace. There were chairs and benches on the green and on the gravel, and a group of palm-trees stood between them and the beams of the sinking sun. The duchess, the Donna Clotilda, a thin and almost sickly-looking girl, and the Countess Emilia were gathered closely together, listening with great interest to a Franciscan monk who was describing to them his life and adventures in Africa, whence he had just returned after a five-years' mission. At a little distance the duke conversed with the Bishop of Sassovivo. prelate was a vivid, high-spirited-looking gentleman, dressed with the utmost elegance of which his clerical costume was capable. His habit was of the glossiest black, his violet stockings of the finest silk, his shoes and silver buckles glittered, and a white hand, on which sparkled a fine emerald, held a shining hat of the most satin-smooth beaver with a green silk band and tassels. He was not more than forty years of age, his eyes were black and bright, his hair black, and his cheeks fresh with color. As he talked, his teeth flashed whitely through a frequent smile, and he moved his head and gesticulated softly and gracefully.

The duke, who listened to him with the most polite, though languid, attention, was a man of marble in comparison. Tall and slight, with a face of exquisite refinement, he looked colder than snow beside that nervous and abundant life. His rather thin and perfectly-regular features were colorless, the blue eyes he had inherited from his English mother were as calm as cloudless skies at early morning, and, though he was but little over fifty years of age, his thick and beautiful hair was a silvery white. His air was elegant and lofty, and those calm eyes rested with a singular weight where they were fixed.

Little exclamations of interest were heard from the three listening ladies. The good Franciscan, a man of simple birth and education, who might have been shut up in a stone since the Middle Ages and only just released, was giving them a lifelike description of the customs of those wild desert tribes, and of the loyal kindness and respect with which their chief had treated him.

"And to think," he concluded, with a sigh,—"to think that with

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so many virtues they have all to go to hell because they do not believe as we do!"

The three ladies sighed in concert; the two gentlemen exchanged a swift glance of amusement.

"He means well," the bishop said, rising, "but he might have expressed himself better." And he went to take leave of the ladies.

The Franciscan came to make his compliments to the duke. "It is a fortune for Sassovivo to have you here," he said. "And as to Madama, she is a benediction of God. She is so pious! She has such faith!"

"Yes," said the duke, glancing at his wife, who was chatting brightly with Monsignore, "the duchess has the most unbounded faith in her confessor."

"It is an excellent virtue," declared the unsuspecting frate.

"If he were to tell her to give me hemlock instead of coffee, she would do it," the duke pursued calmly. "I do not think that he will, though, for we are very good friends. I always take pains to be on good terms with my wife's confessor."

The bishop took his companion away before he had found a reply or knew well what to think. Those low, caressing tones, which expressed irony as if uttering the sweetest of compliments, confounded his ideas.

"I am afraid, monsignore, that the duke is a little—" he began, then broke off and left the other to pick up his meaning.

"The duke is an excellent man and a devoted Catholic," the bishop replied, with decision. "He has, however, a keen sense of the ridiculous."

The duke also had made his little comment to the ladies.

"Those dear frati are so good, but also so severe," his wife said. "I think that Count Mirami would have made his Easter this year if his confessor, that saintly Fra Giuseppe, had not ordered him to lick the floor of the chapel of Santa Rosa with his tongue. When I first came here after my marriage, I thought of having one of those dear Cappuccini for a confessor; but I could not stand it. If I were only ten minutes late at mass, or if I happened on a Friday to even put the wing of a thrush into my mouth, he would wring his hands: 'Oh, figlia benedetta, sei dannata! sei dannata!" And a light laugh rippled like a bird-song over her lips.

"I respect him for it," her husband said seriously. "If not hearing mass on holidays and if eating meat on days of abstinence are mortal sins, then he ought to tell you that you are damned for committing such sins."

The duchess stared at her husband. "Well, Marc Antonio Cagliostro!" she said. "There is no possibility of knowing what you really do think. One moment—"

- "I think that consistency is a jewel," he gently interrupted. "And I also think that you are wearing a very becoming dress."
- "Do you like it?" she asked smilingly, turning about and admiring herself. "I have worn it before, but that was when you were in Paris. Reds always become me."

The duke took in his hand her half-uncovered arm and held the fringe of her red sash over it. The color was reflected in a soft blush on that surface as white and polished as alabaster.

The large bell rang for dinner, and at the same moment the young marquis came hurrying across the gardens from the campagna, with a rifle slung across his shoulders and a soft mass of birds' wings and heads half bursting from the game-bag at his side. "I will be down in five minutes, mamma," he said, and flung the bag to a servant with orders to cook the birds at once.

"I thought that he came an hour ago and was somewhere with Teresa," his mother exclaimed angrily. "Is it possible that he will not even be ready to accompany her to dinner?"

Her husband attempted to soothe her.

"You cannot know how offensive such neglect is to a young woman," she exclaimed, "or what it is for a mother to see her son on the point of sacrificing an excellent match to some foolish caprice."

The duke led his wife to the dining-room with every tender and soothing attention; but her words had called up a poignant memory. A scene flashed before his mild where his own mother had knelt and prayed him not to cast away his heart on a poor young poetess when a noble heiress awaited his hand. It was becoming that there should be a gay and elegant lady at the head of his house, and he had almost made himself believe, after years of persistent assertion, that women are pleasant, ornamental creatures from whom one must not expect too much. The poetess was a widow now, sad, sallow, and plainly dressed,

and she seemed to be quite in her place as governess to his daughter. Yet there were times when her face and eyes would light up with a more than youthful splendor, and some noble thought or beautiful fancy would break in music from her lips, making his wife's gayety sound like the "crackling of thorns under a pot" and his own life seem as ashes to him. A vague and thrilling vision would rise of heroic possibilities moving like angels or like armed warriors through the thick mist that enveloped all outside his actual life: he saw children such as would have made his heart bound with love and pride, instead of those whom he forgave and sighed over and sometimes blushed for; age shone golden and purple before him like the corn and grapes of a full harvest, and the hand that ever lay in his was as the hand of an angel. If but that radiant Aurora had been his child, with what splendors and honors he would have surrounded her! what sun and shower of all the world's helps should have waited on the development of her genius! what fame should have trailed after her down the centuries when at length she should set as a star sets!

Well was it for the Countess Emilia that the duchess never suspected this romance hidden in her husband's life, and well perhaps that she herself did not know, for under all her ashes smouldered all her fires. The duke had been to her one of those ephemeral admirers who had sighed about her when her poems were the fashion, and by no means the most ardent one. His very sincerity had defeated itself with the silence of fear.

"Papa," said the Donna Clotilda, coming close to his side as they passed into the dining-room, "you have not spoken to me to-day."

"Have I not, figlia mia? But I have thought of you."

He put his arm around her shoulders, drew her closer, and kissed her on the pale and delicate forehead. The girl, who was proud of her father, blushed with pleasure.

The presence of visitors till the moment of dinner, and the absence of Don Leopoldo, had made their going in to dinner very informal. As the family entered by one door, Miss Melville, who had come down from her room and gone to seek them in another direction, made her appearance from the opposite door. They went to her at once with excuses and explanations.

"What!" she exclaimed, glancing about in surprise; "are we to dine without a clergyman at table?"

"As you see, Donna Teresa," the duke responded, drawing out her chair. "We invite you to dinner sine pavone. But it is not my fault. I begged Monsignore to stay."

Miss Melville was tall, slender, and exquisitely pretty, with bright hazel eyes and a face like a pearl. She was far more habitually lofty of manner than the duchess, and was notably unsmiling. Like most American women who have long had plenty of money, she was beautifully dressed and she was not too much dressed. A rose-colored embroidered muslin, with a quantity of cream-tinted lace, threw a delicate color on her fine pallor, and she wore soft pale-blue ribbons tied around her lovely arms and throat instead of jewels.

"You are colored like the last melting away of a morning cloud," said the duke, who always observed a lady's dress.

The family already gave her the title that she was expected to bear, and she was known in the house as the Marchesa or Donna Teresa. She accepted their compliments quite coolly, as one whose path was strewn with rejected coronets might be expected to do; but she half atoned for her half-superciliousness by haughtily maintaining their consequence with other people. If she did not herself bow down to them, she expected every one else to do so. Moreover, she comforted their anxieties by showing that she was not too sentimental on the subject of her marriage. Apparently, she did not mean to take the part of Juliet nor expect Leopold to play Romeo, though she exacted from him the most scrupulous respect. It seemed to be her pride and not her tenderness which required satisfaction. Yet now and then one might have detected those proud eyes resting on her betrothed with a wistful and searching expression which betrayed a troubled She had forgiven much in him, and in forgiving had already begun to love him. She secretly hoped that her generosity might touch his heart as it had entangled her own, and, with a seeming indifference, was yet constantly watching for some sign of grateful affection. Knowing something of life, though her own had been of a stainless purity, she fancied that a man who had exhausted every dissipation might prize more highly a pure and sincere devotion, and be more faithful to it, than one of untried life, for whom the future might hold temptations of unknown and irresistible force. It did not occur to her that, in the course of this dissipation which she had permitted herself to overlook, her betrothed might have lost the power of appreciating or even believing in a pure and sincere devotion.

The marquis came hastily into the dining-room, and with a murmured excuse took his place beside Miss Melville. "I had no idea that it was so late," he said. "My watch stopped."

The son resembled the father strongly, but with a notable difference. Both had an air of elegance and of gentle languor; but the duke's was that languor of the intellect which finds no new thing under the sun, while Don Leopold's was the exhaustion which follows excitement and intoxication. The father was taller than the son, and scarcely more pallid, but the young man's good looks were accentuated by dark hair and eyes and moustache.

Miss Melville was not deeply offended by her lover's tardiness, for she had had a short interview with him at noon in the winter-garden, and, though she had frowned on all attempts at sentimentality, they had parted very good friends.

"We must be good friends," she had said to him when they first came to Sassovivo. "Don't let us pretend to be in love, because we are not; but let us be good friends always."

"But indeed I am in love with you," the young man had declared, and for the moment with a degree of sincerity. Nothing was easier than for him to be captivated by a pretty face.

"Nonsense!" she had replied; but maybe his words had left a certain sweetness with her for the short time when no other pretty face had been in sight.

And then one day Aurora and her mother had passed them in the garden, and Miss Melville's lover forgot for a moment to answer her, while his eyes followed that bright and graceful figure. Later he proposed to go up to see the old castle, and was only deterred by his mother's sharply remarking that the countess did not wish to see visitors. For a day or two he had looked and wandered in that direction, and in going to the town had taken the path by the rocks instead of the longer Serpentino. He soon gave up what proved to be a vain chase; but meantime his lady's illusion had faded.

"They are shocked at us," she said to him that evening after dinner,

as they sat apart in a distant, half-screened corner of the long double sala. "We are almost hidden from the company. What do they think us capable of doing? And here come half a dozen more visitors,—the women to make flannel petticoats with the duchess, the men to sit and twirl their thumbs. They will all cast occasional suspicious and watchful glances in this direction. What dreadful thing are we expected to be guilty of? Do you know?"

"They are afraid that I might kiss your hand," said her companion. "They know that I wish to."

"Come to think of it, that is the proper thing for you to do," she said. "Am I not your liege lady?"

Leopold bent forward and took her hand. She snatched it back with a kind of anger: "You must make believe, as they do on the stage, where they kiss six inches off. Now they have seen and are scandalized. It is a success. They are all remembering their own sins, and thinking that they knew enough to be a little more sly. Now what other dreadful thing can we do?"

"We might slip out into the garden and disappear," the young man suggested.

"We will do nothing of the sort," she replied with decision. "That would be a real impropriety; and I am never guilty of such. I never mock at real delicacy, but only at the counterfeit. Be careful what you say to me, please."

"Now, don't be angry, Teresa mia!" her lover pleaded in a very lover-like way. "You know I wouldn't displease you for the world."

"Probably not," she began, then broke off abruptly, furled with a snap the great flowery fan she had been waving, and said hastily, "Here they are!"

Glenlyon entered the farther sala with Aurelia on his arm. Aurora remained in the anteroom, and her mother presently slipped out to her.

The duchess rose, and the duke left a half-finished game of chess. "She has given him her hand!" exclaimed Miss Melville.

And in fact the duchess was so impressed by the venerable and dignified aspect of her visitor that she displayed an unaccustomed cordiality. After their first greetings she gave him an arm-chair near her sofa, and laid her work aside to talk with him, while the duke,

presenting his daughter to Aurelia, seated himself between them and gracefully devoted himself to the fair stranger. He spoke English fluently, which won from her a bright look of pleased surprise.

Aurelia was looking very pretty, and the simplicity of her dress, which had something of a Greek character and was of pure white, gave her a picturesque and even distinguished appearance. Her companion seemed to be pleased with her. Her faint flitting smile and childlike cool sweetness kept his eyes riveted upon her face.

"She is very pretty," Miss Melville said to her companion, who was carnestly gazing at Aurelia.

He started slightly. "Is she?" he asked carelessly. "I was doubting if she were."

- "She is very pretty," she repeated proudly, sweeping her wide fan open with a whirring sound. "Any one can see that. She will have a host of lovers in Italy, and will probably end by marrying some count or marquis who takes his title from a hen-coop."
- "What are you angry about?" asked Don Leopoldo, with an air of surprise.
- "Because you would not say what you think,—that is, if any one here ever does say what he thinks," she said, with a bitter inflection and emphasis.
- "Why! do you find us insincere?" he asked, opening his eyes with wonder.
- "Insincere? Dear me! no. I think you almost believe yourselves. You quite lose yourselves in your parts."

Leopold did not reply. He seemed to be languidly puzzling himself to know what she meant.

"Leopoldo mio, I wish that you would be more sincere with me!" she said, turning toward him almost imploringly. "You can trust me more than you know. I would forgive a great deal, almost anything, if only you would trust me and tell me the truth. I am not selfish, and you would find me generous to any fault or weakness of yours. I know something of life, and what it must have been to you. I am twenty-eight years old, almost as old as you, and I have always been in society. I do not expect too much. Is my friendship of no value to you? Do you care nothing for my peace of mind? Do anything; but do not try to deceive me!"

She leaned back in her chair, and raised her fan to hide two tears that fell from her suddenly downcast eyes.

"Dearest Teresa! I value your peace and your friendship above all things!" her lover protested fervently,—and lied. "I will never deceive you in anything. Only, you must try to trust me more yourself, and not be too ready to doubt."

He had not believed her. He did not dream of confessing a fault to her. But for a moment she half believed him.

Meantime, the duchess was talking with Glenlyon. At the first glimpse of him she had determined to be very gracious.

- "We do not look upon you as a stranger," she said; "you are one of our own," and immediately began a series of reminiscences of his mother's family and of the old duke. She prided herself on having sentiments; and, as she fluently exposed all the emotions with which he had probably returned to the home of his birth after such a lapse of years, Glenlyon felt as though some deep in his soul which had lain in solemn and inaccessible silence reflecting the stars were being suddenly churned up into a froth which reflected nothing. For a trivial affirmation is more damning than opposing thunders.
- "But the signorina is all English," she said, glancing at Aurelia. She had already cast several looks in that direction, and marked the snow-drop fairness, and the firm mouth with its delicate smile.
 - "Yes, Aurelia is all English," he said.
 - " Is she promessa?" asked the lady.
- "She is considering a proposal," Glenlyon replied slowly, not sure that he ought to tell so much, and wondering a little at the question.

The duchess perceived his reserve, and asked no more. "It is the hardest question with us, that of marriage," she said, leaning back and fanning herself, as if exhausted by matrimonial complications. "When there are title and estates to keep up, so many things have to be taken into consideration." And she entered with great frankness into the particulars of the negotiations which had resulted in her son's engagement. "Of course it is not what we would have wished," she said; "but it is the best we can do."

Yet even in speaking the duchess bit her lip as if she had received a sharp retort. For Miss Melville had risen and was entering the front sala, followed by her fiancé. To her natural pride anger and

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awakening jealousy had added a new fire, and she was for the moment dazzling. Her ordinarily cool cheeks burned with a rich rose-color; her eyes, often downcast, glanced over her shoulder at her companion with a bright look which was half disdain; her lips, usually so unsmiling, wore a beautiful mocking smile; her whole carriage was imperious. "Look at us," she seemed to say, "and judge which is the superior."

Leopold, suddenly swept away, was unable to conceal an expression of annoyance and mortification. He followed his lady's swift step with an effort to overtake her without seeming to hurry, his eyes downcast and his head slightly bent, giving him the appearance of being even less tall than she, though he was, in fact, a line taller.

Two exclamations greeted their entrance.

- "Insolent!" muttered the duchess under her breath.
- "What a splendid creature!" murmured Aurelia. "She walksif she had wings."
- "She is a splendid creature," replied the duke, looking at his prective daughter-in-law with pride, and without glancing at his swhom he despised.

If Miss Melville had meant to present her lover in the light of inferior, the very brilliancy of her appearance detracted from her such fixed upon her. In this moment he had recovered his coolness; and the coolness which conceals feeling, or is without feeling, has always advantage over emotion. The young lady perceived instantly the she could not maintain the position she had taken, since there was 100 one to support her and she was in the presence of the master and mistress of the house. It would be better to be thought a little abru Pt and unconventional than to have it believed that she had been angry and forced to check herself. Changing her attitude and expression. instantly with a swift grace, as if she had been jesting and were checked by seeing so many eyes fixed upon her, she courtesied with a charming smile, paused to be overtaken by her companion, as if her modesty needed his support, and murmured a few words to him which seemed to be full of confidence and affection.

"Um!" said the duchess to herself, nodding her head. "Not ba ally done."

"It must be difficult to preserve family distinction in these days," Glenlyon said, after a moment, during which his eyes had absently followed the two young people as they went to a whist-table at the other side of the sala. He seemed to be considering the subject. "The drift of modern life scarcely allows of any but individual distinction. And, indeed," he pursued, "the genius of Christianity suggests only individual prominence. However, a family which was founded by some heroic ancestor, and which has preserved those heroic characteristics unmixed with baser motives and elements, has a right to be proud of itself. There is a certain poetry and romance in the idea; and it must stimulate a noble ambition in others."

"Good Lord!" thought the duchess, staring at him. "Does he mean to patronize us?"

"Our family has always resisted encroachments," she said haughtily, "and it will continue to do so. We exercise the only heroic virtue which is now possible to us,—a passive resistance. We gather ourselves together and shut our doors against intrusion. Having promised that he would not again destroy the world by a deluge of water, God has allowed it to be overwhelmed by a flood of democracy. We wait for this also to subside, and for order to prevail again."

Glenlyon turned his head and looked at the speaker with his gaze that seemed to weigh her in a balance. "You are, then, in the ark?" he said, in a tone which could scarcely be defined, so faint was its interrogation.

"Are we not?" she demanded, coloring with pride and astonishment.

"I congratulate you," he replied, looking away. "I wish that I were as sure of myself. Sometimes I seem to be in deep waters, with drowning people all about me, catching at me as they would at a straw."

"What an uncomfortable fancy!" exclaimed the lady, who was tired of the conversation and could not see whither it led. Apparently, much philanthropy had made this man mad. Why could not people be content to do the small charities which waited at their doorstep, and not go wasting themselves on humanity at large? She thought with complacency of those flannel petticoats which carpeted her path to heaven and never gave her nightmare fancies. "We have heard of your good deeds," she added, with a complimentary smile, becom-

ing charming again. "But I hope that you will now take your repose tranquilly, and leave to God those evils which you cannot yourself remedy."

Glenlyon turned to her again, this time with a smile. "You could not have given me a wiser counsel or a more deserved rebuke, madame," he said. "I thank you. It is true that I am too much inclined to forget that the world does not rest on my shoulders."

The duchess was radiant. She had merely uttered what was to her a very stale truism, since she always left God to do that which she did not wish to do herself, and she was enchanted to find herself a prophetess in the eyes of this old man whose respect and admiration she valued, though she would have scorned his blame.

- "And now tell me how you like the looks of my American," she said airily.
- "She is a very beautiful young lady," he replied, glancing across the rooms to where Miss Melville sat overlooking a game of cards and murmuring smiling confidences behind her fan to Leopoldo, who leaned on the back of her chair. "She might be painted, and the picture named America."
 - "Americans have a very confident air," the duchess remarked.
- "They are too confident," replied Glenlyon. "Their confidence in themselves and in others will be their ruin. I am troubled in mind for America."
- "Why! you do not think them in danger?" exclaimed the lady, with a sudden terror. War, financial distress, loss of fortunes, all started up before her mind. "She must have her money down before they marry," she was saying to herself when Glenlyon replied. "I am sometimes almost afraid that they are doomed," he said.
 - "Good heavens!" she whispered, waiting breathlessly.
- "They are a noble and generous people," he went on. "They are at that period in their national existence where their whole style of thinking is large and frank. They are without rivals on their own continent, and they laugh at the idea of danger from Europe. If it were only from fleets and armies, they might well laugh, for they are invincible to any force from without. But they are open at every pore to subtle attack, and at this moment their whole national life is eaten through and through by inimical foreign influences. Boastfully con-

eited, they will not see that the army which they laugh at is already anded on their shores and recruited by dupes from their own ranks. In the whole fabric of their politics there is scarcely a single solid block of what made them a nation. With a mingling of generosity, short-sighted self-interest, and vanity, they open their doors to all the world and share everything with the first-comer, and they think that naturalization-papers make patriots. At this moment there is more influence exercised in the United States by foreign than by American ideas. It has been, and still is, for the most part, only an influence; but the time is not far distant when it will be an acknowledged power. They are like little Red Riding-hood, who thought that the wolf in the bed was her grandmother because it wore her grandmother's night-cap. When they begin to find the eyes and the mouth too large, it will already be too late to save themselves."

"You think that there is a plot, then?" said the duchess breathlessly, trying to understand what was being said to her.

"No," he replied. "If there were, it would be easier to detect and defeat. There are plotters, undoubtedly; but many who will be, and are, most dangerous to America believe themselves to be perfectly honest. They have a different view of life, that is all. If they could have the same money and liberty and power in Europe, they would prefer to live in Europe; but, since they cannot, they would be pleased if America should become a second Europe."

"And is there no help?" asked the duchess, perfectly mystified.

"It has sometimes seemed to me that the effort to introduce women into politics might be providential," Glenlyon said slowly. "They will either kill or cure. Women are always more subtle and less generous than men; and if American women should be really and intelligently patriotic, they would be good counsellors. It is the mother of animals which defends her nest and her young most fiercely. So these female eagles may have a keener sense of coming danger and less foolhardy generosity."

The duchess had listened with terror and impatience to this discourse, of which she did not understand ten words. She seized on the first opportunity to ask, with a consuming anxiety, "Do you think that there will be trouble very soon? Do you think that this year, or within a year or two, the crash will come?"

"There may not be a crash for a hundred years, if ever," was the reply. "I do not predict a crash, but a silent and lamentable change. The United States might remain a republic, yet have no relic of the spirit of its founders. There may not be even a notable change in twenty years."

"Oh, then," said the lady, with a smile of relief, beginning to fan herself, "that is one of the things which we will leave to God, Signor Glenlyon. And now will you allow me to present my son to you?"

The son was anything but obliged to her for the proposal. Nothing could have been less congenial to this friend of French and Italian danseuses than the serious old man whom he had already named Signor Mosé; and though Glenlyon, always kind and condescending to young people, imposed on him as little as he could, their conversation was brief.

"Please present me to that dear old man," Miss Melville whispered to the duchess, who was about to separate her husband from Aurelia. "I foresee that I am going to admire him. How genuine he looks!"

"He is clumsy, Teresa," was the whispered reply. "He has been talking politics to me, and I haven't an idea what it is all about. I believe that he thinks property in the United States is not very safe. You had better ask him."

And so Glenlyon found himself seated between the two lovers, one of whom availed himself of the first opportunity to slip away.

"Signor Glenlyon," said Miss Melville, as soon as they were alone, "I have heard every word you have said about my country."

"Is it possible!" he said in some confusion, glancing across the sala at the table where she had sat. "You must pardon me."

"I am one of those eagles who see and hear a long way off," she replied calmly. "Don't mind my having overheard. I am glad of it. If I had wings, I should be inclined to fly away to-night across the ocean and help protect my nest."

The duchess hardly liked to do it, but the duke seemed to her so unnecessarily gallant to the young Inglese that she could see no other way than to present her son, especially as he stood at her elbow.

"You must go and speak to Signor Glenlyon," she said to her husband, and herself took his chair.

But, seeing that, instead of obeying her at once, her husband had

paused at the door of the anteroom, through which Aurora's bright face was visible, it occurred to her that the countess and her daughter should join the company, and she went to bid them do so, first giving her daughter a significant glance.

But before the Donna Clotilda could occupy the vacant chair, her brother had slipped into it.

"You make me think of English snow-drops," he said, in a low, tender voice. "You bring back some of my happiest recollections. I seem to be again in England." And he sighed.

Aurelia's scent for a lover was perfect.

- "You have been in England?" she asked quietly, aware of two pairs of feminine eyes upon her, and seeing the Donna Clotilda lean back in her chair in order to hear better.
- "Yes, signorina; we have relatives there. I spent a month there three years ago, and it seemed to me the ideal life and country. I was in London three weeks in the spring, then accompanied my friends into the country for a week. What a country! What a people! But I cannot conceal from you that I should be unhappy if I were obliged to spend my life there."
- "I can easily believe that," Aurelia replied, without a glimmer of a smile. "The climate is not bright, the people are not gay. It is not Italy."
- "Oh, but that is not the reason," the young man said earnestly, lowering his voice still more. "If I lived there I should naturally marry an English lady, and she would make me the most wretched man in the world."
 - "And why, pray?" asked Aurelia, in unaffected surprise.
- "Ah, signorina, you do not know the fervid heart of the South," he replied. "We require love; friendship does not satisfy us."

Aurelia's eyes, which had been wide open with surprise, drooped a little. "Our family affections are very strong and enduring," she said coldly.

"Family affections!" he repeated, as if to himself. "Well, it is useless to explain. You would not understand."

She was glad that he did not explain, since his sister was listening; but she answered as if he had: "Foreigners mistake us so much. Our manners are usually calm; but that is custom and self-control.

I think that our feelings are quite as strong as those of Italians. The sole difference is the habit of reserve."

"If it were so indeed!" he breathed out, in a voice of thrilling melody. "If one could believe that love exists underneath that frozen exterior, there might be hope that it would one day break through its silence. But there is the very difficulty,—the delay. An Englishwoman thinks, reasons, doubts. She will not smile upon her lover till she has known him months, perhaps years. While an Italian—Signorina, this is the land of the God of Love, and his arrows slay in an instant."

"That must be rather startling," remarked his companion, with a faint smile.

"I told you that you did not understand," he sighed.

"I believe that the love which begins in haste goes in haste," the young lady said. "One needs to know the person well, to become in a measure familiar with his character, and then the affection which he excites has a lasting foundation."

Leopoldo had been bending slightly forward, and had scarcely looked into his companion's face. He now lifted his head, and looked at her with a smile and a brilliant piercing glance, in which were blended incredulity and a tender mocking. "May I ask, signorina, where you learned your definition of love?" he said, in a voice that was the very voice of love itself.

"My reason taught me," she replied steadily, though her heart fluttered a little under that sudden look and tone, at which, as through some suddenly-opened door in her Northern nature, all the South seemed to blow in over her. "And I have the experience of those who are older and wiser than I."

His face dropped again. "Gods of Olympus!" he breathed out, as if to himself. "She has never loved!"

Aurelia blushed and bit her lips. Then, seeing that Glenlyon had risen and was looking at her, she gladly rose, and, going to her guardian, laid her hand on his arm, and looked up at him with a dimpling smile which both the duke and his son mentally pronounced adorable.

The duchess graciously accompanied them to the door of the sala. When she turned back, Miss Melville was beside her.

"Duchessa," whispered the young lady, slipping her hand into the

other's arm, which she pressed closely, "Leopold is going to fall in love with that girl."

"Nonsense, my dear!" said the mother, but without concealing a sudden alarm. "Leopold has fallen in love with you, and that girl is not to be compared with you."

"She has one, and the greatest, superiority over me," murmured Miss Melville.

"And that?"

"He is not sure of her."

"But, Teresa mia, that is a mere caprice," insisted the duchess. "You must not take those little fancies seriously. Why, I might momplain that the duke talked with her an hour this evening. The question is not how many pretty faces a man admires, but which he prefers. However, leave it to me. You may depend on my not allowing any trifling."

And when the company broke up she called her son aside. "And so you are at your old folly again!" she said. "You have made Teresa angry."

It appears to me that Teresa is very easily made angry," he repliced carelessly.

Your conversation with that English girl justified her anger. I do not blame her, Leopold."

And, pray, what could I do?" he asked mildly. "You presented me. I talked with her ten minutes, and she went away with scarcely a good-night to me."

You talked of love to her," his mother said, with unappeased displeasure.

"Love!" he echoed, with an air of astonishment.

"Oh, don't pretend," said the duchess scornfully. "Clotilda says that you talked of nothing but love, and she heard every word."

There was just an instant's pause. Leopold had seated himself between the two, and, turning his back to his sister, had presently forgotten that she was there. "But, mamma," he said, spreading his hands out argumentatively and looking at her with a childlike candor, "what on earth is a man to talk to a girl about, if not of love?"

"You must not neglect Teresa," repeated the mother, with a gesture of impatience.

- "I will marry her to-morrow," he declared.
- "She will not consent, and you know it. I have warned you, Leopold, and will say no more. If you lose Teresa, I will never forgive you, and I will punish you. Be sure of that."
- "Felicissima notte, mamma," said the young man sweetly, as his mother turned angrily away.

She did not reply.

"Cursed little spy!" he muttered, still standing where she had lesh him, and looking after her, while thinking of his sister. "I remember now that Clotilda always was a spy."

A servant was closing the windows, which had been open all terms evening, for the night was like summer.

"Leave this open for me, and I will close it," the marquis said, amelighting a cigar, stepped out into the garden. "Pretty life, this!" muttered, walking up and down the green. "I wonder how long can bear it."

He walked until his cigar was smoked to the amber, then threw the end away with a toss into a palm-tree, where the spark touched a moderan down a long floating leaf. He watched it drop on the grass, the endrew a deep breath. "She is a snow-flake that I would like to melem," he muttered.

CHAPTER XIIL

MARIÙ'S LOVER.

EVERY day Mariù went down the rocks to the villa, bearing a little note from Aurora to her mother,—a note so full of delight that it was a wonder it should need a bearer and did not put out two small will and fly down by itself. There needed but little to make the girl hap P. If her mother were well and near, and her own surroundings peace ful, up rose the fountain of her nature and covered all the world with rainbows. The two principal facts which she had to communicate we see that she had got hold of the family laces and ruffles that needed mending, and that Aurelia said she mended most beautifully;

inded over to her. And—grand climax of all!—when the the villa should come up to the castle, she would make the th her own hand, give a certain chosen cup to the duke, he had a great admiration.

the young lady was as triumphant over her little domestic though she had never dreamed of flying, or of melting a with the warmth of her own heart.

all things meanly, both great and small. Aurora was one to do all things nobly.

from the villa was made with a flattering promptness, all Signora Emilia driving up one afternoon through the town ered wagonette.

ne general salutations were over, Miss Melville turned to han air which she must have been at some pains to assume, might be called imposing. Her head a little bent, she ook down at the English girl from a height; there was a on her lips, and a thin veil of sweetness worn over an experfect superiority. She had called Don Leopoldo to her ess, graceful gesture, and rested her hand on his arm while v words to introduce a subject; and, having engaged them floated away with a cool dexterity which it was impossible id went to seat herself beside Glenlyon. She seemed to or thrown, her lover away, and forgotten him.

tood a little apart with the marquis. "I will show them of to blame," she thought, understanding the manœuvre, self to treat him with the most formal courtesy. But her as uncalled for. Her companion was as formal as herself, he be suspected that he was a little bored. He scarcely ser. She had, indeed, perceived that he was habitually his glances, but made them telling when he did give them, and deeply-fringed lids, fit for an odalisk, would tremble, and let a shy, bright arrow dart between, then droop and ilken shade again.

ened to terminate their forced conversation and join the 1 her daughter, who were looking at the view from the I iss Melville was left a moment with Glenlyon.

spired to tell you my plans," she said, laying a delicately-

gloved hand on the arm of his chair, and leaning smilingly near him. "I am almost resolved to give up Italy and go back to live in America. I should take a house in Washington and interest myself in politica. And I shall marry a self-made man."

"I am sure that you have only to choose," Glenlyon said gallantly, and wondering what had happened at the villa.

She opened her eyes wide: "Only to choose! And you think that so easy? Why, it is about the most difficult thing one can do. People say that I am hard to please. The truth is, I am pleased only too easily. But I have had two hundred proposals in Europe, and might have had two thousand. You have no idea, sir, how a rich and pretty girl is chased after. I have sometimes wished that we could use now some of those old methods of thinning out lovers,—throwing a glove to the lions, or setting them fighting one against another."

"But what will the marquis do?" Glenlyon asked.

She took the question with cool serenity: "That is for him to deciOnce I give him up, I shall not interest myself further in his affair

"So now he will know that the coast is clear for his ward," s he thought, as they were interrupted.

The duke admired a small and exquisite bust of Napoleon I., on t pedestal of which were inscribed two lines from Manzoni's "Cinq Maggio:"

Due volte nella polvere, Due volte sugli altar.

"The inscription was Aurora's thought," Glenlyon said.

"And you did it at her request!" the duchess exclaimed. "I afraid that you spoil her."

"She is not one of those whom appreciation spoils," he replied "She is the most superior young lady I have ever known."

The duchess stared, not without displeasure. She did not approve of people in subordinate positions being allowed to conceive a hish opinion of themselves.

Aurora meantime had made the tea, her fragrant flowery Pek Oc, with an air of painstaking daintiness and smiling pride very pretty behold. But the duke and his son disconcerted her plans somew to assist her.

"I know that I am not a fit companion for Hebe," said the duke,

self beside her when the others were served; "but when Janymede—"

Jove then take his place?" she asked.

mia cara!" he said, smiling and surprised. "Did you the convent?"

m mamma. But this cup is yours," she said. "I kept cause it is the prettiest. See! it is all pinks."

ild!" He took the cup and admired it, to please her. tell me, are you happy here?"

happy!"

ing lady is kind?"

n angel!"

3 gentleman?"

saint !"

namber is comfortable?"

had chosen it from the whole house. They have given t the villa, so that I can exchange signals with mamma window. I cannot see her plainly, but I see her handen she waves it."

ou an opera-glass?" the duke asked, amused at this love-wo ladies.

never thought of that," she said.

shall send you up one this evening by your mamma."

od you are!" she exclaimed, delighted. "But everybody ie now, and everything is as charming as possible. All my the east this autumn."

you like teaching?" was the next question.

proud to teach her!" said Aurora, with a fond, admiring urelia, who was talking with the duchess and the Donna showing them her music. "But I do not know enough. Isk mamma something every day. I lie awake at night we I shall answer her questions. Sometimes I say such!" and she blushed vividly.

t?" the gentleman asked, with a smile.

she asked why the ev was prefixed in the evviva, and bene, I didn't know, and I said that they were like little ake the words up the more casily."

"And so they are!" the duke declared, laughing. "But you mustn't give yourself any uneasiness. You talk beautifully, and I am sure that you teach beautifully." And he thought, "The idea of an exquisite girl of nineteen years of age lying awake at night to think of prefixes and irregular verbs!"

The duchess thought that her husband had been talking long enough with the most superior young lady whom Glenlyon had ever known, and interrupted them, not to talk with Aurora, whom she treated rather carelessly, but with a pretence of examining the tea, which she had been praising.

How infinite are the shades of that liking which is not, and never can be, love, though it is often mistaken for love! The sweet attraction which charms, but which a touch may destroy, the friendship which caresses, the friendship which keeps its distance and would be changed to disgust by a caress,—they are legion. Between Aurora and Glenlyon a spiritual sympathy existed, yet their manner was that of the most distant respect, while she turned to the duke with a sense of sweet attraction. His beauty, his fineness, the delicacy alike of his reserve and of his kindness, all suited her. It was one of those airy fascinations which are possible only where love has never been.

There are women who may be gradually induced to pass these bounds which their nature has first set; but their purity is of the snow, which may be melted or soiled. There is another purity, of fire, which is unapproachable and unchangeable. Aurora had the purity of fire.

When their visitors went away, the family accompanied them down to their carriage, and for an instant Don Leopoldo found himself beside Aurelia.

"I hope," he murmured, "that my behavior of to-day has expiated my lack of self-control of the other evening."

She blushed slightly with surprise and embarrassment, and hastily removed herself from him without replying.

Miss Melville had caught the gesture, if not the words, and her lip curled as she turned to Glenlyon and began to talk gayly, seeming to be quite occupied with him, and making a very striking picture indeed, as her rich attire floated about his plain dress, her fresh pallor of a magnolia-leaf shone beside the gray pallor of his age, and her sunny hair contrasted with the sculptured snow of his.

The duchess invited them to dine at the villa the next week, and they drove away, all but Don Leopoldo, who chose to return to the villa by way of the rocks. As he made a last salutation, he cast a keen, flashing glance at Aurelia; and she, pleased that the visit had passed off well, and thinking, perhaps, that she had not treated him very courteously, gave him involuntarily one of her sweetest smiles.

He went away full of triumph, never doubting that he had established an understanding with her, the more so that both Aurora and Glenlyon had turned away when the smile was given. He foresaw a fascinating and exciting flirtation; and, smiling at his own thoughts, with a little mocking at his easy victory, he went on, laying plans for future meetings.

As he went down toward the villa he saw a servant-girl coming across the garden toward him. Mariù had been down with Aurora's daily note to her mother, and was coming back. She came plodding steadily along, smiling to herself, her head down; for she had a lover at the villa, and she had seen him for a minute. Her blue petticoat hung in thickly-crowded pleats swinging just above her ankles and revealing snow-white stockings and thick, high shoes. Tight gray corsets were laced over her white polacca, with a bow of gay ribbon set behind each shoulder. A long silver spadone, the head being a clinched hand with the thumb shut inside, was thrust through her shining braids.

Mariù glanced up on hearing steps, and, seeing whom she was about to meet, assumed a serious and business-like aspect. The marquis barred her way. It had occurred to him that she might be a useful friend at the castle; and, besides, he never neglected an opportunity to have a tête-à-tête with a pretty girl. So, when she had said a serious "Addio," and was passing on, he stepped between her and the stone stair. He asked where she had been, how she liked her place, and a dozen questions to detain her. She replied promptly, but with reserve, meeting his bold gaze with bright, steady, and repelling eyes.

"Don't be in such haste!" he said, when she made a movement to pass him. "You are too pretty to run away. Your cheeks are like roses."

"Do me the favor to let me pass, Don Leopoldo," she said, with austere dignity. "They will be waiting for me at home."

"First give me a kiss," he said, holding out his hands, and taking a step nearer.

"No, signore!" replied Mariù, with emphasis, pushing her under lip out scornfully. "I'm not that sort."

"Nonsense! You're all that sort!" he said. "Now, Mariù."

She turned her back upon him, and had taken a step as if to reture to the villa, when he called her:

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"There! don't be silly! I was only jesting. Come along, and will let you pass."

She returned, walked warily toward him, and made a rush to pa him, when he caught her. "I didn't promise that I wouldn't ki you," he said, laughing as she struggled in his arms.

"A-a-a-h!" growled Mariù, with a low-voiced, bitter circumflezzis, and, catching the spadone from her hair, she plunged it fiercely in to his neck and shoulder. Then, drawing it out as he quickly released her, she thrust the weapon back, without wiping the blood from into her braids, and went on up the stair, pale with anger, and not deigning to look behind her.

"He had better let me alone!" she muttered, and went clumping on in her thick shoes, her lips so closely pressed together that the protruded, and her eyes, as bright as a hawk's, fixed straight before.

Don Leopoldo was terrified for a moment, but soon found that he is hurt was not a very serious one. She had known just how not to k him, as, if it had been necessary, she would have known just how kill him. That gouging stroke from the neck to the shoulder cou do not have been more cleverly given by a surgeon.

He went home rather crestfallen, to put himself into the hands on his valet, Alfonso.

"I mustn't let Renzo know," Mariù said to herself, as she wenthrough the Gola.

Renzo, or Lorenzo, was Mariù's lover,—a native of Monte Fortino. He was an exceedingly handsome and rather wild fellow, who, left an orphan in childhood, had never been restrained in any way. But his heart was not bad, and he was faithful to Mariù. It was she who had persuaded him to leave Monte Fortino, and had procured a place for him at the villa to take care of the duke's horses. She watched

over him with a motherly care, always afraid that he might fall into bad company again, or that the love of adventure which had been his bane would make him weary of a life of monotonous labor. He seemed contented enough, did his work faithfully, and put all the money he could save into Mariù's hands. She felt a fond and trembling pride in his steadiness, and looked forward impatiently to the time of their marriage, when he would be more closely under her care. The marriage would take place in the spring. She had already finished her own corredo, and had for some time been knitting stockings for him and making up his linen. In her matter-of-fact way she showed him each article as it was finished, and consulted him on the subject. These were her gift to him. On his part, he would be expected to give his bride a set of gold—chain, ear-rings, brooch, and finger-ring—and a gray silk dress. She would be married in the best woollen dress she had as a maiden, and only put on her silk dress afterward when they would make a bridal tour to Rome. That was their etiquette.

The young man was by no means indifferent to these preparations. He had a good deal of pleasure in being finely dressed, and it was his private opinion that, when they went to Rome, even Mariù, in her gray silk, gold ornaments, blue neckerchief, and shining braids transfixed with a new spadone, would not be more noticed than he, with the black curls around his transparent golden face, the profile that more than one painter had praised, the embroidered collar, and a pair of those beautiful red-and-white stockings showing above his shoes. They would go to the theatre, visit the great churches, eat in a trattoria, and wander through the streets to their hearts' content for a week. Then Mariù would come back to her place, which was too do to lose; "and," thought Renzo, "if only Gian would die, I could have his place at the castle." And, without the slightest feeling of ice, he concluded that it would be a very good thing for him if Gian should go to heaven before spring.

Of course Renzo had not a grain of principle except what little miù had tried to implant in him, and that was only a higher sort of see I finterest.

The party in the carriage had not gone home without a slight cloud ove their horizon.

"Duca," said his wife, "what do you think the Signor Mosè wants me to do?"

The duke languidly expressed a consuming curiosity to know.

- "He wishes me to help change the world," she said, laughing.
- "What is the matter with the world?" the duke asked, after a rather long pause, seeming to be in as much ill-humor as politeness would allow. All his conversation since leaving the castle had been pointedly addressed to Miss Melville.

He was, indeed, displeased with his wife for having interrupted his tête-d-tête with Aurora. He seldom saw the girl, still more rarely had a word alone with her, and to talk with her when his wife was by was impossible. The duchess invariably swept all other women out of the conversation, unless they were her equals in rank. Aurora was in some slight degree under his care; and, as he had announced before going to the castle that he wished to speak with her, and had sought her apart, he considered his wife's intrusion ill-mannered.

"The chief trouble I see in the world comes from meddlesome people," he said, with quiet distinctness. "So many people are perpetually putting their noses in what does not concern them. If there were a law against such trespasses, I would willingly see it enforced."

Having been occasionally admonished by her husband to keep within her limits, the lady perceived that she was being lectured, and became silent. He was so habitually amiable that his rare displeasure was impressive.

- "You were angry because I interrupted your conversation with Aurora," she said, as soon as they were alone.
 - "Yes," he replied, fixing his eyes steadily upon her.
- "What could you have to say to that girl which your wife must not hear?" she flashed forth.

An angry red shot across the duke's face, but he controlled his voice. "I counsel you to go no further on that track," he said slowly. "Beware how you use my name and that of an innocent girl whom I am bound in a certain measure to protect."

The duchess cowered and began to wipe her eyes. "What have I said?" she exclaimed. "I can't imagine why you should be so angry."

Her husband went on, quite unmoved by her tears: "What respect





.. She looked at him and silently measured their mutual strength."

would you have for me if every time I saw you speaking alone with a gentleman—and I see it often—I should instantly place myself beside you? How would you like it?"

The duchess looked up with a bright and charming smile through her tears. "I should be delighted," she declared.

"Then you would be delighted to see me make myself ridiculous and annoying," her husband retorted, not in the least mollified by her coquetry. He was quite accustomed to the pretty little ways with which she was in the habit of luring him from any track she did not wish him to follow. "You know quite well that I would not stoop to such a course; and, if I did, you would be far from delighted. I am in earnest; and I want an assurance that there will be no more of this worse than folly."

She looked at him and silently measured their mutual strength.

She saw that she must submit, and it made her nerves quiver with a quick instant of rage. Her hand rested on a table, the fingers touching a glass from which she had drunk. A swift impulse seized her to ding the glass into her husband's face. Then she said tremulously, There is only one way to cure jealousy in me, and that is to love me better than all others."

Madame," the duke exclaimed, for the first time speaking passion-sately, "do not let the walls even hear you connecting the word 'jeal-**pousy' with the name of that girl. It is absurd! It is monstrous! It **is vile! If ever I hear a breath on such a subject, I shall know whom **to punish."

She burst into tears. "You love me no longer!" she sobbed. "It is a long time since you loved me."

He laughed lightly. "I declare to you," he said, "that if we were unmarried now, and even if I knew how provoking you are, I believe that I should still propose for you."

The April face again. And so their quarrel ended, leaving her in a salutary fear.

The Countess Emilia, while the family were out, had passed a few happy solitary hours in the winter-garden, listening to her own footfalls between the green walls, and setting her thoughts to music. Aurora's note had been brought to her there, and had been a note of music in harmony with her fancies:

"Be sure you come up before avemmaria, if only for a moment, mamma mia. I have put on my purple dress with a white zephyr shawl and a good deal of white lace, so that it is becoming. Only the effect is odd,—I don't know why. It seems to set me apart. Aurelia wears her Margherite dress, and is lovely. Happy as ever.

"AUBORA."

The rather odd effect which the wearer of the purple dress observed was, in fact, that she looked an ideal royal princess,—an effect which was not lessened by the band of very yellow tortoise-shell around her head and the crescent of balls of the same at the top of her comb, showing above the low full coil of her hair.

The mother sighed with contentment, kissed the little letter, and resumed her walk. She was so absorbed in her thoughts that for some time she took no notice of a succession of rifle-shots which sounded very near her; but, becoming at length aware of them, she went, half apprehensively, to search out the meaning of a sound so unusual in that place.

The winter-garden, extending eastward, was lost in a small but beautiful wood that clung to the thin soil where the steep rocks climbed to the mountain, making a large triangle of fine cool shade in summer and shelter in winter. Going toward this wood, the countess saw Mariù's lover standing by the largest tree of all, a great pine, and examining its trunk. He had a rifle in his hand, and had evidently been firing at a mark, for she saw him loading again. She paused, uncertain whether she should reprove him or not.

His rifle loaded, Renzo began to run. He made a circle of the woods, passed the pine-tree a hundred paces or so, turned swiftly on one foot, slung his rifle up and fired, and off again, all in an instant. A second time he came round, and again the rifle flashed up and was discharged in that scarcely measurable pause.

"Lorenzo!" the countess exclaimed.

He paused instantly, looked at her, snatched his hat off, and went to meet her. "I beg your pardon," he said, with a somewhat confident smile. "I thought that all lor signori were out." And he explained that he came to this place occasionally to practise when the family were away, not having time to seek a more distant one, and

pointed out that his mark was directly in front of a high rock, and that therefore no person could be in danger, even if passing by the mountain-side or if he should miss the tree. "But I never miss," he said, with a superior air.

"And why should you wish to practise, when you are not a soldier?" asked the lady, glancing apprehensively at the rifle.

"Oh!" He tossed his head with an expression which seemed to say, "What fools women are!" "I like to go hunting," he said. "And, besides, who knows whether I might not be a soldier?" And he quoted one of those rhymed proverbs which are always on the lips of the Italian country-people:

Impara l'arte e mettila da parte. (Learn an art and keep it apart.)

The countess went to examine the mark. Renzo had fixed an oak-leaf—one of those narrow and deeply-incised oak-leaves of Italy—in a crevice of the bark, and every shot was in the leaf: six shots not an inch apart. She exclaimed at his skill.

"Oh," he said, "I have done better than that;" and he took up from the ground a perforated leaf and showed her a row of holes beside the long cord. "I want to break the spine of the leaf," he said. "And, see! one shot touched it."

"Well, Lorenzo," said the lady, "I would rather have you for a friend than a foe."

"My rifle and I are always at the disposition of the Signora Contessa," said Renzo, uncovering himself again and showing his white teeth in a smile.

She went back to her musings, lacking the courage to reprove the marksman, if indeed he merited reproof, and, on the whole, concluding that she would not even mention the incident to the duchess. There was something in the black eyes of this young mountaineer which told her it would be just as well not to interfere with him.

An hour later she went up to the castle, and Aurora, who had been watching for her, ran down to meet her at the door, and led her directly up to her own chamber.

"The duke gave me something for you, child, just as I came out,"

she said; "and I have waited to look at it with you. Oh, an operaglass! and such a pretty one! And, now, what is this roll?"

She unrolled the sheet of drawing-paper, and both exclaimed with pleasure when they saw what it contained. The duke, who sketched and designed beautifully, had drawn and faintly colored a façade of a "Temple of Love," taking something from the Countess Emilia's idea of a tableau vivant of a temple with girls supporting the roof. But his lovely carvatids did not touch the ground. They stood on the bent knees of kneeling men, who surrounded each form with a sustaining arm and looked up with adoring faces. The girls at the corners had both eyes and arms uplifted, and their faces were the rapt expression of seraphic contemplation, while the kneeling figures regarded them with an absorbed and serious gaze; but where the open roof rose in the centre, a girl at either side stood on her lover's hands instead of his knee, and, lifted high, bent her head under the leafy cornice and laughed down into his face. From the draperies of these two figures two lovely cupids, leaning to embrace each other, made the arch of the door, of which the keystone was a kiss. Birds sat above the cornice, and light-falling vines wreathed the sustaining forms, while a flock of hovering doves outlined a plumy dome with their white wings. All round beneath, the blue rippling waters of a river made the place an island, only a strip of emerald daisy-diapered sward lying between wave and fane.

"The duke has to go to Rome to-morrow," the countess said. "He starts very early, so as to return in the evening."

"Tell him that I will wave him buon viaggio," Aurora said.

"And he wishes me to tell you," her mother continued, "that Renzo is training a horse for you to ride with the Signorina Aurelia. It was intended for Clotilda, but she will not ride. She is too timid."

"Mamma," said Aurora, with an air of conviction, "that man is the quintessence of princeliness."

The next morning she was up with the dawn, and found that a thick fog covered everything. It was disappointing. But presently, with the rising sun and a rising breeze, the mists began to blow into folds, like a curtain, piled and impervious here, thin and transparent there. The Monterone frowned itself clear, and one could see an interminable line of sheep moving across its dark front, coming up from

the east and going down toward the west to change their pasture. They moved in a soft and indistinguishable stream across the frowning rock, coming up out of silvery, sun-steeped mists, crossing the clear height, and rolling down into the thick western fog, a leisurely, spirit-like host.

The tiny shadow of a bird on the roof-edge fell on Aurora's white hands as she leaned from her window. The little shadow head turned from side to side, there was a chirp, two little shadow wings came up, and away it flew. Sassovivo felt the sun,—that splendid autumn sun to which the mists add the last charm.

The villa gardens began to come out, the Greek wind blew gayly, a carriage became visible before the vestibule of the casino, and the duke came out and looked about, as if at the weather, seeing all the heights sunny and the plain veiled like a bride.

Just as he was about to step into the carriage he bethought himself of the message he had received, and, looking up at the castle, saw a white figure and a white scarf against its black old walls. He smiled, waved his handkerchief, and stepped into the carriage, leaning out to wave his signal once more as the castle disappeared.

CHAPTER XIV.

A TREE OF PARADISE.

ROBERT McLellan conquered his family much sooner than he had hoped. He was on his way to Rome almost as soon as Glenlyon was settled in Sassovivo. Returning to London from Paris, he had found a small legacy awaiting him, and that had decided the matter. He had let no grass grow under his feet, as he triumphantly wrote to Aurelia, and in a day or two he would follow his letter to Italy. It would not do for him to come at once to Sassovivo, as he must first systemize himself, and, moreover, he wished first to finish a picture on which he had long been at work.

Everything had prospered with him. He had met in London the young and already famous sculptor Salathiel, and this gentleman had

offered him the use of his Roman studio for three or four months during which he had engagements in Paris. "I feel as if I had always known Salathiel," he wrote. "He met me at once with the noblest frankness, and was as generous and helpful as any friend could be. He has a princely heart, and is a poet from head to foot."

In short, Robert was full of enthusiasm. "I do not mean that Rome shall spoil me, or that mere fashion shall dictate my subjects or the treatment of them," he wrote, "though I would gladly find my inspiration in any noble enthusiasm or epical event of our time. I shall paint neither gods, goddesses, nor any nude figures whatever. I do not believe that I will take anything from the antique except Scripture subjects. I will see if the life of to-day does not give me something worthy of preserving on canvas. In any case, I am resolved, de arrangement, that I will never represent anything mean, except to show and under the foot of scorn, anything cruel, unless the punishment also visible, nor anything sad, without suggesting consolation. Tell never that you approve my resolution."

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"Poor dear Robert!" thought Aurelia, as she read this letter, full of a glad and noble looking-forward. "I hope that he will not combere depending on me. I told him not to." And she went to read the letter to her guardian.

It seemed to him that she was not as much rejoiced as he might have expected and did hope. "It isn't possible that this young Italias is outshining Robert!" he thought.

For during the few weeks which had intervened between their firs visit from the villa and the arrival of this letter, Glenlyon had become aware that Don Leopoldo was always on their traces. Aurelia and Aurora rode out every day, while Glenlyon accompanied them in a little carriage he had procured with some difficulty in the town, and latterly Don Leopoldo rode also, though his lady did not. Aurelia gathered up her Protestant skirts about her and went every Sunday to the cathedral to hear the sermon, going in just as the preacher ascended the pulpit, and leaving the church the moment he came down. She went to take a lesson in Italian, the speaker having a beautiful style and pronunciation. Jenny always accompanied her. Glenlyon had more than once seen the marquis there, not with his family, who had their chairs near the altar, but farther back, leaning in some shad

er from which he could watch Aurelia. He came up frequently ne rocks to the town, and looked up at the windows as he slowly ed the castle. He met them everywhere. One evening when they dined at the villa he had pretended to take leave of them, then ly joined them afterward as they went up the rocks, and walked with them beside Aurelia. It was true that her manner toward was all that it should be. Her guardian had never seen her show uch reserve toward a possible admirer. Still, he was not quite on the subject of Don Leopoldo.

ne young man's triumph had indeed been short, and his disappoint-bitter. The smile on which he had counted so much had brought nothing. Instead of finding a secret ardor prudently veiled, he an impenetrable reserve which did not entirely hide a haughty ress. He watched for a movement when she was listening in the ch, and she sat motionless. He watched for a glance, and her were lowered. He gazed his soul away without a response. In he met her face to face, his eyes begged for a smile. She red at him seriously, and spoke as to a stranger.

nd meanwhile, as he gazed and waited and hoped, the fancy which begun light as air grew and strengthened. Like a vine that begins only one transparent curling tendril that a kiss would melt and a yr break, but that clings and grows till that which it grasps is at length in a prison of strong interlacing cords, so this fancy ht his soul, and grew, and bound him inextricably. trength? There were times when, with a mingled wonder and he tried to break loose from the fascination; but his will also bound. The fair, softly-waving hair grew to be as the hair of a ess, and, to his imagination, possessed some potent hidden power, ough, if one watched, soft phosphorescent lightnings might flash of it and play in an aureole about that guarded vestal form. Her e, pale, firm, and regular, seemed to be carven in marble, and it ne so impressed upon his mind that he saw it everywhere. Could that this face had once lighted up with a smile for him,—a sweet tender smile all for him? What had changed her? How he offended her? He sought in vain an opportunity to put the

urelia was not unmoved by his evident devotion and distress, and

sometimes her coldness cost her an effort. But she had not forgotten the smile which she had caught on his face when he turned away on that day of his first visit to the castle,—that hateful smile of an evil mind, significant and mocking. It revealed to her with a perfect clearness as much of the man's baseness as she was capable of compre-What, then, had he presumed to imagine in her which could merit such a smile? she asked herself, and the answer was prompt: he had found what all such men find wherever they look,—a reflection from their own minds. Yet, little by little, his earnest, entreating regards touched her. Whatever his sin had been, it was evident that he regretted it. She began to find a fascination in this constant following. Vice was to her too entirely exterior and vague to make a very deep impression. Her curiosity was awakened to know what he really felt, and the romance and attraction of a prohibited intimacy began to surround him. She almost wished that she could have an explanation with him, if only to dismiss his attentions definitively. became irritating.

On one of those days the family at the castle went down to make a dinner-call at the villa, several rainy evenings having delayed their visit, and Aurelia sat the whole evening hedged in by a company of Sassovivo ladies who were sewing for the poor. She talked with them, examined their work, and begged them to make her useful if the poor were in need. In the midst of charming them with her amiability, and, still more, with the prospect she held out of a contribution their funds, her attention was arrested by hearing the countess say, a gentle but perfectly distinct voice, "Excuse me, Signor Sindaco, I do not agree with you. I think that you are mistaken."

Something in the tone, or in the momentary silence which follow made every one look up. A group of people surrounded the du and his wife and daughter, among them the sindaco of the town,—

Animal grazioso e benigno,

as Dante might have called him,—and all were looking with some littl surprise at the countess, or glancing inquiringly at the Signor Passaffori, who was smiling and blushing with surprise and embarrassment at finding himself unexpectedly contradicted, and by a lady, and that when he had only said what he thought every one would agree to,—

that a literary man or a poet had no business in politics and was unfit to hold office.

The duchess was the first to speak. "But, my dear Emilia, I agree perfectly with the Signor Passafiori," she said, with smiling arrogance and an emphasis on the pronoun.

The countess was slightly pale, but smiling, and her large eyes, grown luminous and steady, looked the duchess calmly in the face. "Of course opinions will differ, Signora Duchessa," she said, with respectful firmness; "but there are always facts to learn. The saying of Christ, 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' is as applicable to politics as to religion. Modern nations have not among them a peer to those ancient ones which were governed by poets, or where poets were most honored. Moses, David, and Solomon,—has the world ever seen again such rulers? And how perfect was the rule of Joseph in Egypt! Yet when he appeared before his brethren in his father's house they mocked him. 'Behold, this dreamer cometh!' they said. Ah! it would be well for both religion and politics if poetical ideas and true poets had more power."

The duke, with a faint smile, was gazing steadily into the speaker's glowing face. She had spoken with increasing fervor and firmness. Pausing an instant, she went on more impetuously:

"Society will never be redeemed—will go on sinking lower and lower—till what are sneered at as poetical ideas shall have the power they deserve. What are these poetical ideas? They are lofty and pure ideas. What is poetical justice? It is pure justice. And what s this vaunted practical wisdom? It is material, egotistic, and short-sighted. It is frequently shamefully mean and dishonest.—Pardon my challenge, Signor Sindaco," she added, suddenly turning to that embarrassed gentleman with a brilliant and flattering smile. "I am sure that you are a great deal more poetical than you are aware." She had caught sight of the duchess's face flushed with anger.

The duke also saw that his wife was preparing to annihilate her friend, and made haste to interpose: "I am entirely with the Signora Contessa Coronari," pronouncing her name with great respect.

Aurora, sitting behind her mother, and trembling half with pride and half with fear, blessed him in her heart.

The duchess laughed scornfully. She would have liked to retort

that in her house the "Signora Contessa Coronari" was only a paid governess, but she did not dare. "I could never associate the idea of power or dignity with rhyming," she said. "Nothing is more weak than poetry. But we must not criticise poets in Emilia's presence, I find."

Miss Melville exclaimed, "Oh, duchessa mia, you think that poetry is weak. Beware how you make it your foe! Some one has been asking me to sing, and I have a good mind—" She whispered a word to the duke, who accompanied her to the piano; he smiled and nodded, and in a moment she burst out with a stornello which, certainly, no one else of the company would have dared to sing there. It was one of those by Dall' Ongaro which were known from end to end of the peninsula during twenty years, and more, of the great ferment which preceded the union of all Italy:

O spinte o sponte al ciel la fiamma tende; O spinte o sponte va l'acqua alla china; O spinte o sponte, quando il fulmin scende, Crollan le rupi e la magion ruina; O spinte o sponte, per la via che prende, La terra, il sole, il popolo cammina.

(Or thrust on or held back, heavenward the flame tends; Or thrust on or held back, valeward the water flows; Or thrust on or held back, when drops the thunderbolt, Down comes the smitten rock, and the house falls; Or thrust on or held back, in their own chosen road, On march the people, and the earth, and the sun.)

"I wouldn't sing the rest," the duke murmured in the singer's car, and she nodded a laughing acquiescence.

Don Leopoldo, who, with rather a serious face, had been lounging about the room, brightened at sound of the song, and went to the piano.

"Brava, Teresa!" he whispered. "Give it to them! What! You won't finish? Then sing another. Sing 'Vattene, Italia mia, vattene lesta.'" And he began to hum the tune.

"But, since Italia has got out of it, there is no fun in telling her to vattene," she returned. "If there were only something that would

lly hit! How splendid the countess was! She has quite stirred up."

The duke left them to their whispering over the keys, and a moment or the singer's voice was heard again. It was a clear voice, and the ods were so distinctly uttered that they gave an impression of nething incised on metal:

> C'era una volta un re e una regina, Che al sol vederli passava la fame. Viveano da starne, vestivan di trina, Per la felicità del lor reame. Quando la gente non avea farina, Lo re diceva: mangiate pollame.

Lo re pud fare e disfar cid che vuole, E noi siam nati per far ombra al sole. Lo re pud fare e la pace e la guerra, E noi siam nati per andar sotterra. Passa la notte e l'alba si avvicina,— C'era una volta un re e una regina!

(Once upon a time there was a king and queen,
Only just to see them took your hunger quite away.

For to make the kingdom happy, and for nothing else, I ween,
They dressed themselves in cloth of gold and feasted every day.

When the people cried, We are starving for bread!

Go and live on poultry, the great king said.

The king he can open, and the king he can bar,
And we are only born to make a shadow to the sun.
The king is born to please himself with either peace or war,
And we to go underground when the work is done.
Ah! the night passes, and the dawn is seen,—
Once upon a time there was a king and queen!)

Singing with a spirit which stirred some emotion, either pleasurable angry, in every one present, Miss Melville glanced up into Don sopoldo's face as she sang the last lines, and he joined and repeated em with her with a ringing emphasis and effect,—

Passa la notte e l'alba si avvicina,— C'era una volta un re e una regina! As they ended, the duchess exclaimed, so as to be heard by all in the room, "My dear Miss Melville, you have given me an entirely new and unlooked-for experience. I never thought to hear any one sing revolutionary songs in my drawing-room."

She was standing erect in the midst of her company, her eyes flashing, her lips wreathed with a bitter smile. "It is quite all' Americana!" she added, unable to restrain herself further when the singer rose, sparkling with pleasure and mischief.

"I'm so glad you think so, duchessa mia!" returned Miss Melville, seeming delighted by the compliment. "I always try to act all Americana, but sometimes I fear that my long residence abroad has made me forget a great deal, or—learn certain habits! But is it possible that you have never heard any of these stornelli?" she added.

The duchess turned away without replying, and began to talk with Aurelia, showing her an unusual cordiality. Glenlyon had risen to go, thinking a diversion necessary.

"You wicked republican!" whispered the duke to Miss Melville. He was delighted at the stir she had made, and at the cool insolence which his wife's insolence had met. "Are you also revolutionary?"

She answered him seriously, "That depends on what interpretation you put on the word. To my mind revolution means, See how you like it yourself! And that is justice. I love justice better than I love love."

At the beginning of the singing, the Countess Emilia had sought an opportunity to slip out through one of the long open windows into the garden, drawing her daughter with her. "Dear mamma, how your hand trembles!" Aurora exclaimed. "What is it? Why should you care so much? Oh, mamma, I am so sorry that you are hurt!" And she stopped and took her mother in her arms, half weeping as she embraced her.

"She will be angry with me; but I will stand my ground," the mother exclaimed excitedly. "I am tired of these assumptions of my inferiors,—yes, my inferiors!" She stamped her foot on the sward where they stood beneath the trees. "My poetry, my crown and my glory, is to them only a wreath of paper flowers. Thoughts and aspirations worthy of a demi-god,—struggles to see the light of the soul's day,—truths that are sublime and eternal,—they toss them aside

rith empty, cackling laughter, or listen to them with an air of imbecile atronage. I go into a great church alone and sit there looking into he sunny dome or at the frescoed walls, and wait for the thoughts which they should inspire, or I go out under the trees and listen to the pure, sweet whispers of nature, and they smile superior, and repeat their hackneyed jests about poetical abstraction. They have nothing to say to the woman who waits in the church or under the trees for her paramour. She is practical. They can understand her. They like my poetry. It amuses them. They clasp their hands, roll up their eyes, and pretend that it goes to their souls. But where do they think that I find it? Do they imagine that it is inspired by their stupid tattle, their stiff, affected, trivial manners? Do they think that their grandeur, their pinchbeck elegance, their vulgar impertinence, impose upon me? I despise them!"

"But, dearest mamma, then they are not worth your disturbing yourself for them," her daughter urged affectionately.

"True, dear, true!" the poetess sighed, and strove to calm herself. "Don't mind my agitation. See! it has passed already. It was a strong for me to express it once. True, they are not worth it. Intellectually I know myself their superior; yet my heart needs them. If they were gentle and sympathizing, if, where they were ignorant, they did not pretend, their gentleness and sympathy would make me forget their intellectual defects. If only one presumed, I still could be indifferent. But they are an army, and I am alone, and I want sympathy. I am dying for sympathy!"

"Poor mamma!" said Aurora in a trembling voice. "But the duke sympathizes with you. And if you had seen how the American looked at you! She was delighted with what you said; and—did you not hear?—she went to the piano and sang a stornello for Italy. And Italy means poetry!"

The countess composed herself, put her hands to her hair to see if it were in order, and carefully dried her eyes. "If they only loved me, how I could sing!" she murmured.

"Oh, if I could only love enough for all!" the daughter exclaimed.

The countess forced a smile. "My child, your love is enough for all, and I am content," she said. "To tell the truth, it was the thought of you that made me so angry. I have heard these trivialities

all my life, and they scarcely touched me. But lately I have said to myself, if Aurora should be a poetess she will have to bear the same; and that I could not bear."

A light, scornful laugh broke over the girl's lips. "Never tremble for me, mamma," she said. "I am no poet; but, if I were, none but a poet could make me weep. Though they were an army and I alone, my wings would support me. I would not weep for that which I should scorn."

"And have you no wish to sing your own songs, my child?" the mother asked wistfully. "Does not your heart tremble sometimes at if it were the nest of a bird that opened its wings as if to fly, or lifted its head as if to sing?"

"Yes, mamma," the girl replied; "and then I say over to myself one of your poems, or some other poet's, and so lull the bird to sleep again. Or the song loosens its wings, and it floats softly away, and only comes stealing silently back again when I am asleep."

"Do the songs of others express all that you feel?" the mother asked, tenderly smoothing down the dark hair of her child.

Aurora hesitated a moment, then replied softly, "Sometimes I do feel, mamma, that there is something imprisoned that wants to speak, and now and then I hear a faint little tuneless note. But nothing comes. And I am glad to forget it, for it is like suffocation. Does one learn to express one's self after a while?"

"Yes; the power will come," the mother said. "Wait patiently." And she thought, "My child will sing when she loves." Then, seeing a stir in the house, she added hastily, "But, see, your people are going."

They hurried into the drawing-room through the window in time for Aurora to take her leave with the others. The duchess gave her a careless nod and did not look at her mother. But Miss Melville came to take the countess's hand. "I honor you so for speaking," she said, "and I sympathize with you entirely."

Don Leopoldo bowed ceremoniously to their visitors and disappeared, as if to the smoking-room. But they had hardly reached the rocks, escorted by Gian with a lantern, when he overtook them, and offered his arm to Aurelia, who was behind the other two. Glenlyon was expressing to Aurora his sympathy with her mother.

Aurelia hesitated a moment, then took the arm offered her, and made no resistance even when Gian, at a swift glance from Don Leopoldo, passed before them, and she found herself detained at the head of the stone steps. There was a little grassy amphitheatre, and a group of acacias, and a low, broad parapet protected the stair. When Don Leopoldo begged her to listen to him a moment, she even allowed herself to be seated there.

A lover who begged for a smile, was he? He was rather a soul which begged for salvation.

- "What could I do but love you?" he exclaimed, throwing himself at her feet when she attempted to reprove his first word of passion.
- "You have no right to speak to me of love," Aurelia said. "You are engaged."
 - "And if I were not?" he asked eagerly.
- "And, besides that, they say that your life has been an unworthy one. I tell you this from a sense of justice, to give you an opportunity to defend yourself. As I allowed myself to listen to one story, I must listen to the reply, though unwillingly." She uttered the words austerely, rising as she spoke.
- "And, pray, what could my life be?" Don Leopoldo burst forth, starting up. "Can a man set himself against society, against all the influences of his birth? Ah, yes, it is true that he can, Aurelia. I have felt that since I knew you; but I did not think it possible before. What career was there for a Roman nobleman who would not be a priest? If I had been born obscure, I might have had some ambition; but he who sits under a baldacchino sees nothing above him."
- "Honor is above him," Aurelia said, almost indignantly. "Courage is above him. Manliness is all above him." But she seated herself again. Apparently the explanation would not be very brief.
- "Our life was marked out for us," Don Leopoldo resumed, standing with folded arms. "If a man had a genius for poetry, or for science, or for art, he had an object in life. I had neither. I should have liked to join Garibaldi. But my father said that as the fortunes of our house were made by a Pope, it wouldn't be gentlemanly for a member of the family, and the heir, to turn against the Papacy; and I thought that he was right. Then I wanted to travel; but, as I was the only son, my mother would not consent to my going beyond Lon-

don or Paris. She hates the next heir,—a rough-spurred Piedmont colonel, who has never entered our doors, and never will, unless he enters as master. There seemed to be nothing left me but dissipation. They offered me Paris, and I took it,—yes, to the dregs. The devil amused me for a while; but I grew tired of him. Give me credit for that, Aurelia,—that even before I knew you I was disgusted with what they call a life of pleasure. If I had known you before, I should never have entered such a life. My mother wished me to marry, and chose a wife for me. I consented. How was I to know that I should find here the love of my life? Oh, Aurelia! my morning star of love and hope and redemption, put your hand in mine. This engagement is a mockery. I can see that Teresa herself is disgusted with it. She and my mother have no sympathy with each other. But who would not love you, gentle dove that you are! Give me any penance, any command, any time, to make myself more worthy of you. You have taught me that I have a soul, and made me believe in a heaven. You have taught me to despise myself. Pity me! Speak to me!"

"I did not know that you were so noble," she murmured, as he threw himself at her feet again. "But be nobler still, and redeem yourself without the hope of my love, but for God's sake, for honor's sake. I esteem you. I wish to continue to esteem you." She rose decidedly and moved forward.

"Your esteem is precious," he said, following her; "but be generous, and give me love."

She paused an instant and looked him in the face to say, "I have no love to give you," then hastened on again.

"Are you, then, utterly indifferent to me?" he exclaimed in a tone of anguish.

They were near Glenlyon and Aurora, who were waiting for Aurelia, and it was possible for her only to say a word. "I am not indifferent to you, marquis," she said hastily. "You have taught me to esteem and to pity you. I shall remember you with kindness and wish you all prosperity. But you must not mention this subject to me again."

With that he was obliged to go.

No explanation was made or asked then; but when they entered the house, Aurelia asked her friend to leave her alone a moment with Glenlyon; and then she told him all. "I was really tempted," she said. "I think that I was never so much tempted. But he gave me a moment to think, and in that moment duty conquered."

"It is a dangerous position, Aurelia," Glenlyon said anxiously. "His family would never forgive you if they knew. If they were not going away so soon, I should wish to take you away. They will go in a week. Try to avoid him in the mean while. And now call Aurora, and let us forget the world a little while. We have had enough of it this evening."

The shaded lamp was lighted on the large centre-table. Glenlyon sat near it, his head on his hand, his elbow on the arm of his chair. Aurora leaned into the light over a large Bible, and Aurelia sat near her. She usually worked while listening to these readings; but tonight her hands were idle and her thoughts wandering.

Before they parted for the night, Glenlyon said a word to her apart. "I have thought, Aurelia," he said, with the air of one who is yet studying over a subject, "that it would be well if you should think a good deal of Miss Melville. She is a stranger in a strange land. If you were here without me, you would find it very hard if another stranger should interfere with your happiness. She is here alone. A noble mind considers the stranger. A Christian should have a special charity for one. You recollect that Moses and Solomon were very careful that the stranger should suffer no wrong; and theirs was, we are accustomed to say, the era of law, while ours is the era of charity. What Don Leopoldo and Miss Melville may say of the uncertainty of their marriage we have nothing to do with. She came here as his promised wife, the family hold them to be engaged, and have proclaimed the match. He himself consented to it, even sought it, and I imagine that there was no trouble between them till you came. Think of her."

"You cannot think that I mean to wrong her, sir?" Aurelia exclaimed.

"No; you do not mean to, but you might do so involuntarily. You say that you were strongly tempted this evening. You may be tempted again. You should use every precaution. In affairs of this kind the impulse of the moment has a great deal to do."

Glenlyon was right in his conclusion that Miss Melville's doubts

concerning her marriage were inspired by the wish to save her own dignity; but no one else suspected her of any change of plan. She no longer complained to the duchess or to Don Leopoldo, and the latter was too much absorbed in his new infatuation to observe that, though she was always gay and talkative with him, she was never sentimental. Most certainly she showed no sign either of mortification, jealcusy, or heart-break.

While Don Leopoldo had been pouring out his love to Aurelia that evening, his affairs were being discussed with great intelligence by two persons whom he was far from suspecting to be so well informed. Lorenzo had gone up to the castle to see Mariù, and they were having an interesting conversation which much concerned the marquis.

Renzo's visits to his ragazza were not very frequent, nor were they ever quite private, for Mariù was too prudent a girl to invite people to speak evil of her. These interviews took place, then, in the great kitchen after the dinner was over, and Giovanna considerately gave up to them the end of the room overlooking the campagna, her own special post of honor being near the door of the antercom, where she could see every one who entered or went out and hear as much as possible of what was going on in the house. She had her own little worktable in a corner close to the door, with a basket of sewing- and knitting-articles, and there was a tiny drawer where she kept a pencil and a soiled account-book, a rosary and a prayer-book, and a small Bible given her by Aurelia and which she would throw into the fire as soon as the young lady should leave Sassovivo. Meantime, she kept it, lest the giver might ask to see it. For on receiving the book Giovanna had been profuse in thanks and promises to read it, and more than once, when wishing to compliment the young lady, had said, "Oh, what a beautiful book the signorina gave me!" Aurelia never pursued the subject, for Glenlyon had requested her not to say anything to the servants on the subject of religion.

On this occasion there were only Giovanna and Jenny in the kitchen with the lovers, Gian having gone off with a lantern to the villa.

Mariù and Lorenzo sat at the far end of the room, by the open window; for, though late in October, the evening was warm and breathless. Beside the window, a long brass lamp hung to a nail in the frame and cast a red light on the two faces. Renzo lounged in

the window; Mariù was busily engaged in knitting one of those fine red-and-white stockings which pleased him so much. She could knit one in three evenings.

A short silence had fallen between them; then Renzo, who had been somewhat abstracted, spoke out what was on his mind: "Do you know, Mariù, they have set me to watch Don Leopoldo?"

"Truly?" she exclaimed, and stopped knitting while she looked at him. "Who has done it?"

"Chi lo sa! It was Pippa, the duchess's maid, who talked to me, and she gave me this." He tossed a five-lire note into her lap. "She said there was more behind if I did well. I'm to keep a sharp eye on him and Alfonso and see if they have anything to do with the English girl."

"Don't you do anything of the sort!" said the girl in an emphatic whisper. "Let them find some one else. You will get yourself into trouble."

" Ma, che!" said Renzo contemptuously.

"I tell you you will!" the girl insisted with still more earnestness. "If you did anything, it is always better to be on the side of the lovers, for there are more of them, and they will live longer and pay better. But I don't want you to do either. Oh, Renzo mio, mind your own business, like a good boy. You have been doing so well, making money, and having a good name. Don't go and get yourself into a scrape."

"And don't you go and get yourself into a passion for nothing," retorted the youth good-naturedly. "It is nothing. I have only to open my eyes. And, besides, don't you see that if I refuse I shall lose my place? It must have been either the duchess or the American who sent Pippa to me; and either of them could send me away in a minute."

Mariù drew her brows in an anxious frown. "It is true," she sighed. "But do be careful. And don't tell them anything that will make trouble. He'll find you out if you do; and then much they'll care what happens to you when they have got what they want!"

At this moment Glenlyon and the young ladies were heard coming in, and Renzo went away, rather glad to escape further argument. He was pleased with the commission he had received. It promised him money, and it promised a spice of adventure in the life which he was beginning to feel too monotonous. But for an occasional wild gallop on horseback, and his rifle-practice, Renzo would not have been able to hide his discontent. He had conquered it for Mariù's sake. He had a deep and true affection for her, and an absolute confidence in her. There was but little of romance or passion in his love, but a tenacious and exclusive affection. A mountaineer, brought up to labor, to live in the open air, to eat a crust of bread and drink more water than wine, he had little time or disposition for those reveries, illusions, and intoxications of the imagination which are the miasma of love at leisure.

Several days passed, and Aurelia saw no more of Don Leopoldo. They went out as usual, but never met him. He had obeyed her only too well. She was even a little mortified at seeing that the man who three days before had vowed that his life would be worse than worthless without her managed so well to exist without even seeing her. She could not be aware that he was constantly hovering near her when he could do so unseen. Every night he watched for her light; and one evening when she and Aurora sang a duet in the soft air on the great terrace, he climbed up the crags from the campagna to listen nearer.

Aurelia's voice was a soprano, clear and sweet, though not strong, and Aurora's a mezza-soprano, with silvery upper tones, and reedy, vibrating lower ones. The air thrilled about them as they sang together, and Glenlyon listened with tears rolling down his cheeks. Down in the campagna the contadino stretched his head forward and opened his mouth to assist his hearing, as that sweet harmony swelled on the air, and the company at the villa stopped their talk to listen. Gian, Giovanna, and Jenny left their gossip, and came to lean on the parapet of the lower terrace while the song lasted. What wonder if a lover were enraptured!

But Aurelia only knew that she saw him no longer; and, though she assured herself that it was best so, she still felt that their explanation had not ended quite as she wished.

Then Robert's letter had not made her any more content. The labor, aspiration, and patience of which it was full made her half forget its fulness of delight, and grated harshly on the smooth, picturesque life she was living, with its careless quiet and hidden romance. She felt a certain irritation at the thought that Robert might soon come and insist on a promise or a refusal, and just now she felt inclined to give a refusal rather than be hurried.

"I am young," she thought, "and I cannot bear to settle down to a commonplace existence so soon. I want time to think."

It began to seem to her that she had really no time to think,—that she was always in the company of others; and one evening she excused herself from the reading, on a plea of fatigue, and went to her own room.

It was the night after the full moon, and the moon had not risen. Feeling indisposed to sleep so early, Aurelia put out her light, changed her dress for a white wrapper, opened her jealously-closed blinds and window, and seated herself in a low chair opposite, and facing the starry night. Her window opened into a balcony toward the southeast, and just above the deep ravine that ran in beside the Gola. Only a narrow terrace and low parapet separated the castle wall from the rocks and the deep darkness outside. Directly under her balcony a fig-tree had in some way taken root, and sent its large branches up to the very railing. A perfect silence and solitude reigned over the scene. Only a breath of air that was not wind came softly in now and then, bringing a sweet odor with it. There was a branch of white lilies twined into the railing of the balcony. Mariù had put them out there when she closed the shutters, finding the perfume too heavy for the chamber.

Aurelia sat and thought, or tried to think; but her attempt soon ended in revery; and presently she became aware of a light all about her, and, looking up, saw that the moon had risen before her face, in a vast hollow between the mountains, and spread its light to her feet, with the shadow of the balcony-railing and the lily-branch finely wrought in black lines on that silver. Low and large,—so large as to seem a portent of some great stellar commotion,—it hung between the mountains, its globe rose-red with the mists of earth. She gazed at it almost with fear, and watched without moving till it silvered upward from the horizon, growing purer each moment, till it became a vision of loveliness illuminating the world. Then she went out into the balcony. All the town stood out in a dark profile against the sky, and the sidelong arch of the old ruin on the summit showed as if

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carved in ebony, with a star shimmering through. The broad campagna and the distant mountains began to take on a frosting of live silver, through which a lighted window here and there showed like a red-gold star.

It was impossible to gaze on such a scene and not feel the every-day world sink away out of sight and some ideal world take its place. The night that wears the glory of silence and moonlight on mountain and plain reveals other verities besides the stars, if it be only the confused palimpsest of our memories of other lives lived before this, or a prescience of other lives to live. Then incredible delights become credible, impulses rush fearlessly out on their ringing track, and a thousand small bonds fall off forgotten. We see our daily life dark and unreal, and only this seems true.

Aurelia, little given to dreams and revery, and ordinarily devoted to what is called order, felt as if she had been all at once changed to a fairy and surrounded by fairy-influences. That light that shone in her face was the light of enchantment.

At first she did not notice the soft tinkling of a mandolin that came up from the ravine; but as it came nearer she smiled. It wanted but that! Some wayfaring lover was climbing those wild rocks in the perfumed heavy darkness, with all the world swimming in silver over his head.

"Happy the girl he seeks!" she sighed, and, leaning over the railing with the sweet lilies against her breast, she looked down.

The mandolin-player was only just beneath the parapet, near, but out of sight. He struck the chords, and murmured a song which, it seemed, could reach no ear but hers:

Sete una dolce mela lazzeruola Che in cima al ramo s'invermiglia sola; In cima al ramo, sull' estrema punta, Dimenticata—no, ma non raggiunta.

(Thou art a lone and lovely peach
Left blooming on the topmost bough,—
The topmost twig of the topmost bough—
Forgotten,—no, but out of reach.)

It was Sappho's graceful fancy sung by Italian lips.

The song seemed whispered with hurried accents full of agitation and ardor close to her ear; the mandolin was thrown down with a sound of broken chords, and Leopold Cagliostro stepped out into the moonlight and looked up at her. She could not stir, but only leaned and looked down into his upturned face, her head and heart swimming in a sudden, sweet intoxication of delight.

He disappeared under the tree again; there was a sound of rustling boughs as he climbed swiftly through the heavy foliage, and in another moment he issued in sight close beneath her balcony, his head against the railing. His face white in the moonlight, his head bare, he looked up and laughed with delight, with will, and with desperation. His limbs were curled backward on the supporting branch as he thrust himself along, in momentary peril of a fall.

If it was terror or delight she could not have told; it was surely intoxication which held her. A protest escaped her lips: "Oh! why are you here? Go down, I beg of you!" but it was habit which spoke, and she was half unconscious of the words. "Are you mad?" she said, and leaned over the railing toward him, fully conscious only of that form half submerged in a sea of green leaves at her feet, with the face shining with love and with a laughter which was joy, not mirth.

"I am here because I love you," he whispered. "I have watched for nights below, and at last you came out. It was my love compelled you to come."

"I must not listen to you! Go now, I beg!" said Aurelia, and bent above him. "You are in danger. You may fall on the rocks. The branch is not strong enough. I hear it breaking now. Oh! go!"

"Let it break!" he replied, smiling into her face, which was, indeed, as fair as a star in that light, with her white drapery and shining falling hair. "Let it break, if you will not listen to me. The stones cannot wound me if your heart remains hard. Call me Leopoldo!"

She thought to content him and make him go, and, clasping her hands, she murmured his name softly: "Leopoldo, go!" and, in speaking, it seemed to her that she loved him. Would love ever come to her in a more enchanting guise than that pale, joyous face, with the

steady adoring eyes, floating in air, upborne by softly-rustling foliage, and overswept by the southern moon?

IIc uttered a low "Ah!" of rapture as she spoke his name. "Bend and kiss me," he said, "and I shall think I am a god. I cannot touch you, see! for only my arms support me, and the rocks are underneath. I am like one fastened to the stake, and love flames up over my head. Bend and kiss me as an angel would kiss a martyr. O my love, kiss me, or I will never go!"

How beautiful he was! Those eyes, no longer shyly glancing, were fully upraised, and all his soul shone through them. "Aurelia!"

She heard the sound with a ringing of tiny bells in her ears. Trembling, half unconsciously drawn and fascinated, she bent over the railing; her long soft hair fell over and veiled him, and her lips touched his forehead,—the "moth's kiss."

"It is only a breath," he said passionately. "Aurelia, love!"
But she had turned and fled, and he heard the hasp of her shutter close.

A breeze softly rose and waved the tree-branches, and the lover hung there and rocked as in a cradle, bliss in his heart and the touch of her hair and lips still tingling around his head like sparks. He had won her! Was there anything beyond? If heaven should all at once float downward and surround you, filling your soul full out of its blissful fountains, would not you lie entranced when it withdrew, and think that more of heaven even were too much? She was the nearest he could guess to heaven.

At last, with a sigh of contentment, he stirred, slid down the branch, and reached the earth, if it was indeed the common earth that was under his feet. Had he not rather descended to the surface of some happy star? His foot touched the mandolin, and it uttered a musical sigh. He stood there motionless.

It is the beauty of love that it brings back the childhood of the soul. Up floats the old wonder-land from underneath the veiling years; the old glamour that neither art nor science can hang over mountain, sea, and valley is there again, the sweet credulity of other times comforts the heart once more, and all things great and beautiful become possible. Standing there under the tree which had borne for him the blossom of a new and supreme delight, Don Leopoldo felt

himself a hero. What brave deed waited to be done? Let it call, for he was ready.

He turned to look up again at the closed window, and a swift shadow caught his glance and arrested it, and there was a sound of a foot that struck a stone. A spy! Fancy seeing the grinning, peeping face of Satan behind the gate of the paradise that has just enwrapped you. Lorenzo had stayed a moment too long, thinking that the window would open again, and the lover's swift descent had imprisoned him behind the stones in an angle of the castle wall, from whence he had seen and heard all. He was a wiry, agile fellow, and brave enough sometimes; but the surprise, the uncertainty, a wish to make no noise, and also to do no harm to the young marquis, all together for a moment paralyzed him. And in that moment Don Leopoldo had caught him up like a whirlwind and flung him over the wall into the ravine. There was a sound of rolling stones and crackling twigs, but nothing else.

Then the lover walked noiselessly away, reached the Gola, and returned to the villa. The man who got up from that fall would tell no tales. And well Don Leopoldo knew that such a tale told by such lips and entering such ears as would listen to it would have tarnished forever the fair name of the girl he adored. It were well worth while to break the head of a spy and prevent that.

The duchess, well aware that her son was out and that Lorenzo was on his track, retired content, and was sleeping the sleep of innocence when Leopoldo waked her. "Don't make any disturbance," he whispered close to her pillow. "I've thrown Renzo into the ravine at the other side of the castle. If you wish to have his body picked up, you can. I am going to bed." And he went.

With a smothered exclamation, she sprang out of bed, ran to a closet where her maid slept, and waked her. And while Don Leopoldo lay dreaming of Aurelia, Pippa and two servant-men were hurrying down the avenue to the campagna, from which the ravine was reached.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SOUTH WIND.

MISS MELVILLE, whose attention very little of what went on about the house in those days escaped, was quite aware that something happened in the night, but what, she could not guess. There had be a sound of doors softly opened, and of light, hasty footsteps, and, looking from her window, she had seen figures hurrying down the avenubetween the trees. Not being able to sleep well, she rose with the earliest light. Everything was still. The gardens were silvered over with dew, through which the autumn flowers shone with a softened richness. A broken circle of purple, sun-tipped mountains surrounded the billowy ocean of mist that covered the campagna.

That silence and freshness were tempting after the feverish unrest of the night. Hastily dressing, she threw a veil over her head, took her parasol, and went softly down-stairs and out through one of the long windows which she knew how to unfasten. The doors were not yet open, and there was no sign of any servant about.

How cool and invigorating the morning air was! How lovely the palms, with those long plumes tossed into the air and curving back like the waters of a fountain! How nobly the pines lifted themselves toward the sky, and how sweet was the earth beneath them, embalsamed with the scattered foliage of a century of proud and patient growth! There was a circle of chairs here, where they had sat the evening before.

One not accustomed to early rising, or to going out early, is sometimes touched with a sort of surprise on finding the trees just where they were the night before. They had so sighed over us, waved us response and salutation, sheltered and shaded us, and been altogether so human, that there is an unconscious impression that they also may go away or have some other home. But here they are, still sighing, saluting, shading, and rooted in the same spot. The heart of nature is so much larger than we sometimes think, and our own hearts often so much smaller.

The young American paused an instant under the trees, and looked about her at the lovely villa, and at the rolling mists below. It would certainly be pleasant to be the mistress of such a place, to live in the most beautiful country in the world, and among a people who, whatever faults they may have, are still the most exquisite people in the world. For while a bad Italian is the very viper of the human race, fit only to be destroyed as quickly as may be, a true Italian galantuomo or gentildonna is the flower of the children of men.

"If I only could stay!" she sighed, and, buried in thought, did not for a moment notice a strange sound, which presently attracted her attention. It came from a narrow ravine between the castle and the rocks, a place much less wild and deep than that beyond the castle. This place was a torrent-bed during the rains; but when dry—and it had now been dry for months—the contadini used it as a short road to the town. Some one was coming down,—a woman,—running wildly, leaping from rock to rock, and screaming as she ran.

Hastening down to the Serpentino, Miss Melville reached the crossing in time to see Mariù rush past her, her face deathly white, and her eyes wild.

"Mariù! Mariù!" she called; but the girl flew past without appearing to see her.

She followed, catching her delicate robes about her, and running fleetly off across the olives and the mist to a great plain of vineyards and wheat-fields, where the dark, blurred outlines of a farm-house loomed before her. She saw Mariù rush into the arms of a woman who stood in the door, and then they both disappeared. When Miss Melville reached the door, there was no person in sight; but through the open door of an inner room came a murmur of voices. She followed the sound without hesitation, and stood on the threshold of a large bedroom, where several persons, surrounding a bed, hid its occupant from her sight. There was the woman of the house, two farmmen, and a third of a superior grade, who proved to be the surgeon of Sassovivo. Mariù, on her knees at the head of the bed, was leaning against the pillows and moaning out only half-articulated words of love and sorrow. She did not turn, though all the others did, at the sound of a step and the sight of a stranger. It did not escape Miss Melville that there was a certain alarm in their faces at sight of her.

The woman, Betta, came hastily to meet her, and would have led her into the outer room again, but she put her aside. "Who is that?" she asked, pointing to the bed. "What has happened?"

Betta began to whisper that it was a contadino who had met with an accident, when the surgeon interposed. "It is a young man from the villa, signorina," he said. "He has had a fall, and is badly bruised. But he will soon be up again. I would advise you not to look at him. He is an unpleasant sight."

"Excuse me," she said decidedly, and went at once to the bedside. There was not much to see, except blood-stained bandages and matted hair, and two wild eyes looking out between the cloths. She took the hand that seemed unhurt, and bent down. "If Don Leopoldo did it, press my hand," she whispered.

He gave her hand a sharp, quivering pressure.

- "I had nothing to do with it," she whispered then, and, drawing back, went quickly out of the room, the surgeon following her.
- "He will not die?" she asked in a faint voice, turning to him. She was quivering with disgust, compassion, and anger.
- "I assure you not," the surgeon repeated. "And," he added with a slight hesitation, "there is no need of saying anything about the affair. These little things will happen, and it does no good to make a fuss about them. Of course I do not know anything. My business is to cure the fellow. I may say, however, that a certain lady whom you know requested me to keep the matter quiet, and the family here—there are now only the man and his wife and brother, fortunately—will say nothing."
- "You must understand that I have nothing to do with the business, and have found it out only by accident," Miss Melville said coldly. "If it were in any way my affair, there would be something said about it, I assure you. But I would like to help that poor girl. Will you please say to her that as soon as Lorenzo is able to go about, if they wish to marry, I will give her a dote? It shall be left with her master, the Signor Glenlyon, at the castle."

Scarcely waiting for a reply, she hurried out of the house, and went toward the villa, muttering as she went, "This finishes everything for me and Leopoldo. What a providence that I waked!"

Mariù, recovered from her first terror, made herself useful. A

messenger had gone up to the castle for her. As she swept off the outer steps and the court-yard in the early morning, a little shower of dry beans had fallen around her. Looking in the direction from whence they came, she saw a hand beckoning her out into the Gola, and half a man's face visible beside the gate. She went out with a sinking heart. Well she knew that face of Lorenzo's evil genius, the dark, sorry, half-savage fellow they called Martello. As she followed, he receded. She called to him to stop, and he still beckoned her onward, pausing only when they were out of sight of the castle. Before he spoke, she knew that something had happened to her lover. "Renzo wants you down at Betta's in the vineyards," he said roughly. "He's been thrown over into the ravine." And she had waited for no more.

Now, somewhat reassured for the present, but full of despair for the future, she helped deftly to dress her lover's wounds, with no weak shrinking, or turning away of the head, or exclamations. Pale, and with compressed lips, but entirely firm and quiet, she obeyed the surgeon's directions, washed the swollen and discolored face, her hand light, steady, strong, and practised, cleared the matted hair, and fastened the bandages. His was not the first battered human form she had seen, though it was the dearest one.

Poor Lorenzo was, indeed, miserably bruised and battered. His left arm was broken, and, what was worse, his nose was broken; there was a cut across one eyebrow, and another across his upper lip, and cuts, scratches, and bruises everywhere. He would be up in a short time, as the surgeon said, but the beauty of which he had been so proud was gone forever, and he knew it.

When all was done, and nothing remained for Mariù but to go, a sudden weakness overcame her. "Oh, Renzo mio!" she cried with a rush of tears, and bent her face almost, but not quite, to his shrinking, painful face, and put her arms around, but still without touching, his sensitive, bruised shoulders. Then, calming herself all at once, she wiped her tears sternly away, as if they were a weakness which she would not allow herself to repeat, and went back to the castle, after promising to come down again during the day.

The sublime and simple firmness with which the poor, and some chosen souls who do not need poverty in order to be noble, bear the most cruel suffering and utter no complaint, destroys one's admiration for the affected and egotistical softness which thinks it a proof of delicacy to scream at the scratch of a pin, and of tenderness to wish all the world to wear black for its sorrows. Mariù felt as if her throat were tightened by a dozen cords and a band of iron surrounded her temples; but she went about her work as usual, and performed it well. If she was paler than usual, no one noticed. Who observes if a servant look well or ill? If they cannot work, they must say so; but one does not watch their faces. Of course she said not a word of what had happened.

Miss Melville was fortunate enough not to meet any one on returning to the villa; and, as they all took their morning coffee, tea, or chocolate in private, she was able to regain her calmness before seeing any of the family. From her window she saw the Donna Clotilda go out for her morning walk with the Countess Emilia; and when the servant who went for the morning post came back with an armful of letters and papers, she knew that the duke would be shut up in his study for an hour or two. Presently, when Don Leopoldo appeared, slowly sauntering out under the trees, she went down, and seated herself in an arm-chair on a shady terrace. A servant brought her a footstool and placed another chair near her, and presently the marquis, perceiving her, came toward her. He came with his eyes fixed keenly and intently on her face, like one who, knowing that much has happened since he last met his present companion, watches to see if the other is also aware. He meant to tell her all, and had been studying how he should do so, and he had been assuring himself that she would not care. Had she not a score of times said to him that it was doubtful if their engagement ever came to anything, or something to that effect? Yet, when he saw her apparently so well pleased and friendly, his courage failed. But not for that did his resolution fail. Wealth, honor, his mother's wishes, the opinions of his friends,—all were not worth to him one smile or touch of the girl he loved. The thought of her surrounded and steeped him through with delight. He had completely forgotten the unfortunate spy whom he had thrown into the ravine. Alfonso had told him that Lorenzo was not fatally hurt, and had been taken care of, and he had then dismissed the subject from his mind.

"You do not look well this morning," Miss Melville said smilingly as he approached her. "What is the matter?"

"I'm well enough, thanks," he replied carelessly, taking with a rather ill grace the chair she pointed to. It was directly before her, and therefore in the full fire of her glances. Her brightness embarrassed him. "Good heaven!" he thought, "is she going to forgive all my offences and want to make up with me?" And for the first time in his life he lost the power to use those smooth phrases which bridge over a difficult moment and silence when they do not convince.

His companion watched his embarrassed face and manner with a mocking smile.

"What was the meaning of the stir I heard in the house last night?" she asked, after a pause. "I fancied myself in some old feudal castle in the Middle Ages, and that horrible deeds were being performed. I lay between sleeping and waking, and imagined a thousand horrors. There were mysterious whisperings, the *fruscio* of garments in the corridors, doors softly opened and shut, steps on the stair, and mysterious forms stealing down the avenue. For I actually got up and looked out. I was afraid that some one was coming to murder me."

"You have been reading more novels than are good for you, I suppose, and they have given you wild dreams," he said. "I heard no stir. I sleep too well. It must be amusing to have frightful dreams. Of course nothing happened, or I should have heard of it. Alfonso is a wonderful being. He tells me if a mouse squeaks."

Don Leopoldo spoke as if he were half asleep yet, trying to imitate the inimitable languor of his father, and while speaking drooped forward, carefully examining his finger-nails, as if their state were the question of the day to him.

"Oh, several things happened last night," she said, "after you left us,—to see the advocate Bonifaccio on business, you know. I saw you go out through the garden with your mandolin. You made quite a romantic figure stealing from tree to tree. I presume that you and the advocate sang your business, as they do at the opera. He has a fine bass, I know, for I have heard him sing in the church. What instrument did he accompany himself with when you asked him in falsetto what his bill was? Was it a laconic, sepulchral 'Lire venti!" to the lowest scrape of the violoncello? How charming it must have been! Ah, this is indeed the land of song!" she concluded, clasping her hands with enthusiasm.

Don Leopoldo's face grew very red at her first words, though he was seasoned to most attacks of the kind, and he listened with a frown, his eyes downcast, and answered in a constrained voice when she ended, "There is no need of my telling anything to one who seems already to be so well informed."

"I had stopped in the stairway window a moment to look romantically out at the stars," she said more seriously. "I did not intend to watch you. Perhaps you may not be able to believe it, but there is nothing intriguing, or spying, or deceitful in my character. Of course I do not want you to answer any question. I resign all right to ask any, and I assure you that I do not care one fig what you do. I wish I could make you understand how absolutely indifferent I am. Why, I would as soon watch one of the grooms!"

"I know that I deserve your displeasure," Don Leopoldo said, finding an opening.

"It is contempt!" she exclaimed, with an obliging air.

He was silent, coloring deeply again. Liberty was not coming to him with roses in her hands.

"But don't let us talk any more about that," Miss Melville resumed hastily. "I want to be civil, if I can. It is hard; for I am honorable, and I despise all that is low. If I were a trickster, I should find it easier to smile at dishonor. Don't make any excuses. They will not mend the matter. And, besides, I am myself to blame. I should never have consented to this ridiculous engagement when I was not able to carry it out to the bitter end. It must have been your mother's eloquence which overcame me. The duchess is a very talented woman, Don Leopoldo, and a very charming one, too. I am sorry for her disappointment."

"You will tell her?" he asked, with an apprehension that he could not conceal.

"I have no wish to assist at a scene of tragedy," Miss Melville replied. "I shall write to her."

Something more of manliness and noble shame showed itself in her companion's face. "I humbly ask your forgiveness for the seeming disrespect which I have shown you," he said. "I was not worthy of you."

"I know that you are not," she replied. "Neither are you worthy

of that pretty English girl whom you are now deceiving. Or do you really dream of marrying her, and that your father and mother and her guardian will consent? What lectures the weeping Juliet will have to take! Come, tell me of last night. It will amuse me."

And she leaned back in her chair and looked at him with smiling disdain.

Don Leopoldo raised his eyes to her face for the first time, and his gaze was full and fearless. "I am not deceiving her," he said. "I would die rather than deceive her."

His companion's scornful smile became tinged with a slight surprise.

"Why should you be hard upon me, Teresa, when you know that
you never loved me?" he went on more earnestly. "It would be
generous of you to really forgive and help me. You can afford to.
You are rich and free, and can fly like a bird to whatever part of the
world you choose. I am bound here. And, Teresa, I love that girl
with all my heart."

" S'intende!" she said, with a smile of amusement.

His face darkened. It was true that he could not hope to be believed.

"And you expect to marry her?" she asked, with the same amused look.

"It is my only hope in life. It is the only thing worth living for," he answered.

She opened her eyes on him wide, half in contempt, half in wonder. "How ridiculous these lovers are," she thought, "with their conflagrations of straw, their forevers of a month, and their devotions which are an egotism!" Yet for the hour he seemed really in earnest. "I didn't think that you were so foolish," she remarked.

He lifted his head proudly. Every moment he gained in dignity. If she were so careless of losing him, he need not feel too guilty in having deserted her, and could forget everything but his love. "You think it folly that I should wish to marry the only woman I have ever loved well enough to make me despise myself!" he exclaimed. "There is nothing that I would not suffer to win her. They preach to us of heaven, and tell of men who have lived long years of voluntary poverty and pain to win it. She is my heaven made visible; and what the saints have done for their own happiness, that I would do to win her."

Miss Melville looked at him in astonishment. "Have you often loved in this way?" she asked.

"Never! never! It is a revelation. Oh, cannot you believe me? Because I have so many times deceived myself and others, is there no truth in me? If a man were born and lived many years down in a deep mine, never seeing the light of day, you might make him believe that a lamp or a fire was the sun. But if once he came out under the sky at noonday, would it be possible for him ever to be deceived again? I did not know what love is. Now I know."

While he spoke, his companion listened with a growing conviction of his sincerity and a growing wonder over it. "How has that girl made him adore her so?" she thought. "It is because she has been inaccessible, because she would not come down to him. I am her superior in beauty, and accomplishments, and character, and I was willing to sacrifice myself, to be patient, and to make excuses for him. She would not soil a finger for him, and he would die for her. She is right. The talk of good women coming down to save bad men is a delusion. The men do not thank them, and both together fall into the ditch. The women who treat men the worst are the most loved by them. Remember that, my dear Teresa, and see that your next lover is made to toe the mark."

"Well, men are unaccountable beings," she said resignedly, when he ceased speaking. "If it will do you any good to know that I believe that you believe yourself, then be happy. I only hope that your effulgent angel may not be torn into inch pieces, that is all. And now let us go in to breakfast, and see if romance has left us any appetite."

"Duchess," she said, entering the breakfast-room, "the Marquis of Vannosa has been telling me love-stories all the morning, and he has put me in such an exquisite frame of mind that I can eat nothing more gross than strawberries washed in wine and sprinkled with sugar."

The talk immediately turned on love, and a playful war began, the company dividing on the question. But it was evident that the duchess was more in earnest than the others, and she became almost angry with her husband for defending the cause of romantic love. "It is a folly, a madness, a crime," she declared. "It is contrary to common sense. It is contrary to reason." She became quite excited.

"Tautology, my love," said the duke.

- "Ask Emilia if romantic love leads to happiness," his wife exclaimed rather indelicately, turning to the countess, who blushed slightly at an appeal which brought up all the sorrows of her life.
- "This world is not a place where we can realize all our poetical dreams," she said, gently evasive.

They were trifling with their coffee.

"Listen to a parable, ladies," said the duke, setting down his cup. "There was once a people who made war against the south wind. This is historical: Herodotus tells the story; therefore it is serious. Well, the south wind dried up the fountains of these Libyans, and, after suffering it as long as they could, they declared war, and set out to destroy their thirsty enemy. The south wind blew their defiance back into their faces. They rushed to the charge with a storm of lances and arrows. The south wind continued to blow. The Libyans rushed furiously southward, determined to go to the root of the matter, and met their foe as it came in over the Southern Sea, and fell upon it with such a blind rage that they all, men, women, and children, rushed over each other into the sea, and were drowned. History tells us that not one Libyan escaped; but I think that a mistake. And the south wind blew in over them and went to drink their deserted springs, just as if nothing had happened. Signore mie, I drink to Love, the south wind of the heart. It will blow on and drink the freshness of youth when we shall have gone down under the salt wave that covers all."

The countess cast a tearful, smiling glance at the speaker; but the wife rose abruptly and led the way out-doors.

- "I congratulate you on your prudence and your south wind," she said sarcastically, going to him apart. "Such fine talk will do Leopoldo great good."
- "Leopoldo!" the duke murmured, with a cigarette between his lips.
 "What is the matter with him? I was wishing that he and Teresa might be taken up together in a cyclone."
- "Magari!" said his wife. "But he is more likely to blow up to the castle."
 - "What do you mean?" The gentleman stopped smoking.
 - "He was out serenading the English girl last night," she replied. The duke dropped his eyes, and seemed to be carefully removing

the ash from his cigarette. One would scarcely have expected to see such a concentrated anger in his usually mild and indifferent face.

"He has been hanging about her for some time," the mother went on. "I cannot understand how Teresa is blind to it. But possibly she is not. That girl is dark. She is capable of seeing all and saying nothing, till just at the point of leaving us she might lean out of the carriage and say, 'Oh, by the way, that engagement is all over, you know.'"

"And right, too," the duke said, flinging his cigarette away. "She has been patient. See! Leopoldo is leaving her to go into the house. Come and talk with her. It behooves us to pay her every attention."

Don Leopoldo had gone into the house to write a letter to Aurelia. He could now tell her that he was free. "Ah, my love," he concluded, "I shall have many years to pass in purgatory, and I deserve them. But when, at last, I shall be fit for heaven, and feel myself floating upward, come and lean to me out of paradise as you leaned from the loggia last night. You will be all white, like a dove, your hair will shine round you softly, and fall over me, as it did last night. There will be no glare of splendor to dazzle my unaccustomed eyes, but a celestial moonlight, and my moonlight-love among women. How fair your brow was, dear! It had the white of the Milky Way that is all stars. Write to me. I am thirsty for a word."

The letter sealed, Leopoldo called his man and directed him to go to the farthest part of the town and give it to Chiara, the wife of the duke's administrator. She must make some excuse to go to the castle and give the letter to Giovanna to deliver to the young lady at once, asking if there was an answer. If there were, she must wait. And in any case she was to see if there were any news at the castle.

Alfonso was to wait at Chiara's house till her return, then come back to his master without an instant of delay.

The man took his orders with solemn attention, bowed, and went. An hour later he came back. The letter had been delivered; there was no reply, and the only news at the castle was that the great fig-tree had been cut down and pitched into the ravine.

This was stormy news for the lover. "But she will manage to send me a note to-day," he thought.

CHAPTER XVI.

A COUNCIL OF WAR.

WHEN Aurelia had closed her window the night before, and lighted a lamp, she seemed to waken from a dream. Her heart fluttered and her cheeks burned at the thought of what she had done. Rest was impossible. She walked up and down the room awhile, her mind in a tumult; then, softly opening her door, she stole across to Aurora's chamber. "Are you gone to bed, dear?" she whispered through the key-hole, seeing the light shine under the door.

There was a soft exclamation from within, and Aurora, dressed for the night, opened the door. "What is the matter?" she asked in some alarm. "What has happened?"

For reply Aurelia ran across the room, threw herself on the bed, and buried her face in the pillow. Her friend followed her, and repeated her questions with many a tender phrase and caress.

"I have done such a shocking thing! Something so strange has happened! I have been bewitched, and have— Oh! Aurora, you see before you the most imprudent, the most ashamed, the most bold, the most—I-don't-know-what girl in the world!"

And finally the whole story came out, and was discussed with such a mingling of good sense and charming ignorance of the world as might be expected of two such girls, and with the mutual conclusion that everything must be told to Glenlyon in the morning the very first moment that he could be seen.

- "And, oh! what will he think of me?" exclaimed Aurelia.
- "You see, I cannot say a word," Aurora said. "I have a divided heart and allegiance. There are the duke and duchess, and mamma with them, and that poor Miss Melville. And, on the other hand, you, my dearest! Of course no one could help loving you; and if you care for him I would not for the world see you disappointed. Ah! it is certain that love is a terrible power. In one of her poems mamma says that disappointed love is sweetest. I don't know why: do you?"

"It must be because one's expectations are never realized, or—0h! if only I had not kissed him!"

Aurora was at fault. She did not know the etiquette of love-affairs; yet a kiss did seem serious. "I suppose that you loved and pitied him, dear," she said hesitatingly.

- "I didn't pity him in the least!" Aurelia exclaimed. "I think I wanted to get rid of him. As for loving,—I begin to hate him for having betrayed me into such an imprudence. What if any one were to know? I should hate a man who would compromise me."
- "Oh, the Signor Glenlyon will arrange everything," Aurora said soothingly. "But, if I did not love a man, sooner than kiss him in order to get rid of him, I would give the tree a shake and let him down suddenly."
- "I did not say that I do not love him at all," Aurelia replied a little impatiently. "I don't know whether I love him or not. He looked so beautiful! Oh, wait till you have half a dozen lovers, and then see how perplexed you will be. You are sure to have a good many soon."
- "Oh, I hope not!" was the somewhat alarmed answer. "I should want only one man in the world to love me. I should be angry if any one else ever spoke of love to me. Think of more than one man in the world believing it possible that you could love him! I should want to kill them! But for my one I would suffer or die. The perfection of all would be to die for him. I have no thought of marriage. It seems to me that I shall never marry. I should not care for the love that drags itself through the thorny years till it is all torn to rags. Hash out of a cloud, a sudden sweetness which lasts but a day, but limit the memory a lifetime,—that is perfect,—that is my dream,—the divine!"
- "But one can have lovers without going into society," she resume after a palpitating pause. "Mamma does not wish me to go is society. She says I can go to operas and plays if I have the opputunity, but that she wishes me to eat at home, and see my friends private."
 - "That is my guardian's idea," Aurelia remarked.
- "I have had five offers,—made to mamma," the other said very coolly. "And she has refused them all. We will live together, mamma and I, when we have money enough."

"Five offers!" Aurelia exclaimed.

They spent half the night talking, and the rest in sleeping side by side, and sleeping so late that instead of waiting for Glenlyon he had to wait for them.

"Oh, it seems more hideous by daylight than it did last night!" Aurelia whispered, as they all went into the drawing-room together after breakfast.

"I have something to tell you, sir," she called up courage to say at once. "And Aurora need not go away, for she knows everything." And then she told her story in a faint voice, Aurora sitting beside her, holding her in a half embrace, and looking eagerly at Glenlyon, while his ward could not raise her eyes.

He listened in silence, and seemed quite calm, but felt a terror of which they had no conception. He could hardly have believed that Aurelia would so far forget herself. When she had finished her story, he rose.

"Stay here till I come back," he said, and went out by way of the anteroom.

What did he mean to do? The two girls looked at each other. "He looked pale and resolute,"

whispered the other.

Glenlyon went down-stairs and called Gian. "Bring an axe, and Follow me," he said, and went out on the narrow terrace at the south side of the castle. "Cut down that tree," he said to the wondering Gian, who had followed him, axe in hand.

" Now, signore?"

"Instantly."

The brittle fig-wood was not hard to cut, and Gian, under the steady gaze of those stern eyes, worked with a will. In a few minutes the great tree came down with a soft crashing of all its boughs and branches, half of it leaning over the parapet.

"Put it all over," said Glenlyon.

"What! signore?" exclaimed Gian in amazement.

"Cut off the under branches," his master said impatiently.

Gian obeyed. The under part of the trunk was clear.

"Now!" exclaimed Glenlyon, and, starting forward, he put his shoulder under the trunk, and, assisted by the speechless servant,

lifted it with a powerful effort, and sent it crashing down the rocks where Mariù's lover had gone the night before. "No marauding rascal will ever climb to the windows of my house on that tree again!" said Glenlyon to himself, and went into the house with a drop of satisfaction in the fountain of his bitterness. "I request you to stay in the house to-day, Aurelia," he said, entering the drawing-room. His face was still red with the unusual exertion he had made. "And if that fellow comes here, do not admit him, or speak to him. Signorina, I rely on you not to assist in any intercourse whatever between my family and Don Leopoldo." His voice was tremulous and deep, his tone severe. He went into his own room, and came out after a moment with his hat and cane.

- "Oh! what are you going to do?" exclaimed Aurelia, starting up-
- "I am going to talk with the duchess," he replied coldly.
- "I beg you not to!" she entreated. "It will be betraying a confidence. I need not have told you."
- "If you had not, then you would have deceived me," he said, looking at her sternly. "I never have believed you capable of that. It was your duty to tell me; and it is my duty to put a stop to this business, and I shall do so."
- "What will the duchess think of me?" cried the girl, bursting into tears of mortification. "I wish that I had not told you!"

Glenlyon's face softened. "You can trust me, Aurelia," he said more gently. "I know what your delicacy requires. If any one tells of that foolish kiss, it will be the person who received it."

She blushed deeply, and her eyes drooped. "I do not believe that he will ever do or say anything to harm me," she said faintly.

Glenlyon went toward the door.

"Oh, I will promise anything, if only you will not tell them!" she exclaimed, putting herself before him.

He put her gently aside. "Aurelia, I go to save your reputation," he said.

In any other circumstances Glenlyon would scarcely have gone to the villa at such an hour; but he was anxious to lose no time in enlisting the mother on his side, silencing her tongue, and evading her enmity. And he was none too soon. Already the duchess had said everything to her maid, her daughter, and the Countess Emilia, that an angry woman can say, and she grew more angry every moment, and, as she did not wish her husband to know the whole affair, more unrestrained. Not knowing the facts,—for her spy could not speak, and Don Leopoldo would not,—she imagined the worst. There was nothing too bad to believe.

Her judgment did not become more gentle when she was told that Glenlyon was in the garden and wished to see her. Her maid, going up to the castle to see if she could cull any news, had met him on the rocks, and come back. "He is waiting in the passion flower arbor," Pippa said. "And he told me that I need not mention his name to any one else."

"That's right. Don't say a word that the duke may hear," her mistress said. "Oh, something disgraceful must have happened."

"Try to be calm," the countess urged. "I do not believe that things are as bad as you fear. Be a little careful what you say. Wait and hear what he has to tell you."

Scarcely hearing a word that was said, the duchess caught the veil and parasol that were offered her, went out at a side-door leading under a trellis, and ran through the shrubberies, but moderated her pace a little as she approached the arbor.

Glenlyon stood in the midst of the arbor, his hat off, and his white hair so near the leafy ceiling that a passion-flower touched it with its large mournful blossom. He bowed when she appeared, and saw at once that she knew what had brought him. "I see that I need not apologize for coming at such an hour," he began—

"Oh, don't waste time in apologies," she interrupted impatiently. "Tell me what is to be done in this miserable affair."

"It is simple," he replied with dignity. "You will probably tell the Marquis of Vannosa that he is not to come to the castle any more, and that he will do well not to expose himself to the mortification of being refused admittance."

She breathed more freely; but her anger increased as her anxiety diminished. "It is not my son alone who needs to be counselled," she said, drawing herself up. "A young man will always flirt when he is encouraged."

It went to Glenlyon's heart not to be able to deny that her son had been encouraged. "My ward does not understand Southern character

and manners," he said. "She did not deliberately give him any encouragement. She has twice been taken by surprise, and now I hope that her lesson is learned. The proof of her perfect innocence of any wrong intention is that she told me everything immediately."

"What did she tell you?" the duchess demanded.

He would not notice her unpleasant tone. "It seems that the marquis came last night to serenade her. She had stepped into her balcony a moment, not knowing that he was below. He said something which left no doubt as to his feelings, or pretended feelings. She lingered but a moment, then went into her chamber and shut the window. This morning she told me all."

"She shut her window too late!" the duchess cried. "What business has a young lady out in her balcony at night, if she does not wish to be spoken to?"

"Why she was there is no business of mine, nor of yours, madam," Glenlyon said calmly; but a light began to flicker under his heavy white eyebrows. "The night was beautiful, and she may have wished to admire it and to dream in that enchantment of moonlight. What do elderly people know or recollect of the delicate fancies of a young and virgin heart? Her chamber and balcony are her empire, to do as she pleases in, and no one could have expected intrusion in that lonely place hanging over a ravine. Besides, you must remember, duchess, that there is a vast difference between England and Italy, and that those romances which are so common here are almost unknown among us."

"It was just the place where one might expect a lover," the duchess struck in sharply.

Glenlyon paused an instant in doubt. He could not be aware that the lady knew as much of his household affairs as he knew himself.

"There is a tree by which one may climb into the balcony," she said.

Glenlyon's heart sank. "One could not climb into the balcony," he returned, "and, if he could, he did not. He would not have dared."

"He could have got into the balcony if she had helped him," the mother exclaimed. Her companion became crimson. He would have spoken, but the words stopped in his throat. "Who knows how many times he has been there?" she went on recklessly.

"Silence, madam!" exclaimed Glenlyon, finding voice, and bringing

his foot down on the pavement with a stamp which made the duchess start and crimson in her turn. "Not another word of that!"

She stood silent and red, but recalled to her more prudent self. She perceived that she had gone too far, and, though angry at the imperious command, was more afraid than angry. What if he should go to her husband? What if he should punish her by favoring Don Leopoldo?

"I will allow no slander of my ward," Glenlyon went on. "Be sure I will not be trifled with there. If the Marquis of Vannosa utters a word to her disadvantage, I will horsewhip him with my own hand. I am strong enough yet for that." And he held out a hand that was trembling, indeed, but not with weakness, and, grasping one of the sticks that supported the vines, snapped it like a twig. "My ward is accustomed to the society of gentlemen of honor. Your son is the first roué who has ever obtained admittance to her presence."

The duchess was terrified, for the old man towered before her in such anger that she was almost ready to believe that he might seize her arms and shake her breath out.

"There is no call for so much anger," she said, trying to be dignified. "Don Leopoldo, so far from intimating anything against the signorina, declares that she is an angel. Neither do I mean to say anything against her. I dare say it is only a little nonsense on both sides. But you must recollect the feelings of a mother. After all the pains I have taken to arrange a suitable match for my son, I cannot patiently bear to see it put in jeopardy for such folly."

"It is true that you have had provocation," Glenlyon owned, willing to conciliate.

"I have been nearly distracted!" she exclaimed. "And now, what if that man should die!"

"Why should he die?" Gleniyon asked, not well knowing what he said.

"You think it a trifle for a man to be flung over the parapet into the ravine!" she exclaimed impatiently. "If Leopoldo had flung him a foot farther he would have been dashed to pieces. When they found him he was on the very edge of the last precipice, and, fortunately, quite insensible. He was foolish. He went too near."

She took for granted that the throwing of Lorenzo over the parapet was known to Glenlyon and had been witnessed by Aurelia.

Glenlyon's face grew ashen. He looked about in search of a chair, and sat down. "Where is he now?" he asked.

"He is with a contadino family that I know, and has every care," she replied. "The matter will be kept private. The surgeon has hopes of him. I only spoke of a possibility."

"Duchess, I knew nothing of this, neither did Aurelia," said Glenlyon faintly. "She must have shut her window before it occurred."

He leaned his head on his hands. She thought that he was going to faint, and beckoned her maid, who was posted as guard at the end of the alley leading to the arbor. "Run and bring a flask of wine from the little grotto," she said, and gave the girl a key which was her own pass through several doors about the place.

Glenlyon did not raise his head or speak till she offered him the wine, some of a past year from his own little vigna. He did not understand at first. Then he took the glass she offered him, and drank, and in a few minutes a faint color came into his cheeks.

"I do not wonder at any excitement that you may have felt," he said then. "You have suffered cruelly. Pardon my impatience. Is there anything that I can do?"

"Nothing," she replied; and, being kind of heart when not angry, she began to reassure and soothe him.

"If your family were not going to leave so soon," he said, "I should take Aurelia away at once. Perhaps I had better as it is."

But no; she would not hear of that. Leopoldo should go in a day or two, the affair could be hushed up, and all would end well if only they were careful. Such troubles would come where there were young people, but one should not think too much of them. Besides, if he took Aurelia away, Leopoldo would assuredly follow her where perhaps it would not be so easy to keep guard over him.

"And, since the signorina does not know about Lorenzo, it is better not to tell her," she concluded. It was her opinion that the young lady would find such an act of prowess irresistible.

"Not unless it should be necessary," replied Glenlyon, who knew that the incident would disgust and terrify Aurelia.

The duchess was all amiability. She offered her arm to Glenlyon; and, though he declared himself revived and quite able to walk without help, she accompanied him to the rocks. She began to be grateful

to him for having warned her when he might have supposed her ignorant, and for having taken no advantage of his power to entrap Don Leopoldo for his ward. After all, it seemed to her that the Signor Mose might be that rara avis, a perfectly honorable and transparent man. He had all the imprudence of honesty, all the foolishness of honesty, she said to herself. "We must not kill ourselves about this," she said cheerfully. "Young people will be silly; but you and I together will reduce them to order. When we shall have got rid of Leopoldo, you must all come down and dine with us again before we go to Rome. I shall not make any difference with the signorina. I'm sure she meant no harm. And we must not let people talk."

Glenlyon thanked her gratefully. He felt that she was really being very amiable, and that a continuance of relations with the villa would stop any gossip that might have arisen.

"He is really a *galantuomo!*" she thought, as she went back to the house, and felt quite an affection for him.

Don Leopoldo, from an upper window, had witnessed this interview and parting, Alfonso having warned him of what was going on. "So the whole grand army is drawn out!" he muttered, and laughed scornfully. "My brave generals, you are fighting against the south wind." And visions of rope-ladders, a private marriage, flight, and triumph, began to dance before his mind. How delightful were difficulties when love was sure! "The south wind blows!" he said, and laughed again. "The south wind blows! It ought to be a song."

But later, when Alfonso came back with no reply, nor promise of reply, to his letter to Aurelia, and with news that his tree of paradise had been cut down, he understood that she also had been called to account, and that he should not again rock in the leafy boughs underneath her loggia.

Nothing remained but letters; and in the evening he sent another to the castle, and learned that it had been placed in Aurelia's hands. But no answer came.

"I ought at least to write a line and tell him that all intercourse between us must cease," she said to her guardian, who knew that the letters had come, but had not read them.

"And so become entangled in a correspondence and give him a

chance to say that you have written to him!" Glenlyon replied. "I will write to him, if you wish."

But she would not consent. And still another letter came,—a desperate one this time. Don Leopoldo wrote that he should go to the church the next day, and follow her out after the sermon. She must speak to him. He knew not what to think. If she did not give him the opportunity he sought, he should come to the castle. What had he done, that he should be left in such torment?

"I shall do as he wishes, sir," Aurelia said firmly. "He is right. He has reason to complain that no notice is taken of him. I will take Jenny with me and keep her with me, and allow him only to accompany me through the street to the gate here."

Glenlyon saw in her face an invincible firmness. "You think it best so?" he asked quietly.

"Yes, sir."

"Then I think it best to give you a piece of information which I have withheld to spare you pain," he said, and told her what had happened to Lorenzo, and that, though out of danger, he was disfigured, and poor Mariù made unhappy, for life.

She grew paler as she listened, but sat silent, her eyes cast down and her lips compressed.

- "You are still of the same mind?" he asked.
- "The same," she replied.

"I must tell you all that the duchess said," he went on, and, though it was hard for him to repeat her insinuations, he did so. "Can you run the risk of such remarks being repeated?" he asked.

Aurelia had grown deadly pale while listening; but her mouth showed no yielding. "I have trusted you entirely, sir," she said, and lifted her steely eyes to his face. "It is now your turn to trust me. I shall see him."

Glenlyon sighed, and said no more. It was true that she had certain rights, and so had even Don Leopoldo.

And so the next morning Aurelia went to the cathedral, accompanied by Jenny, going in rather late, and scating herself between the pulpit and the door. Glenlyon always went early, and took a chair in a corner near the altar, and Aurora, watching for her mother to come up the rocks, ran out and went with her. It had come to be under-

stood that the mother and daughter should be free at the hours of public worship, and occasionally for a half-hour before dinner.

When she took her seat, Aurelia had to exercise a good deal of selfcontrol not to look about her. She did not give even the most fleeting glance to see if Don Leopoldo were in his usual place opposite her. He was there, and his face lighted with a sudden flash as she appeared. Then his eyes settled upon her, and never moved from that pale and stirless profile, that seemed to be sculptured in some delicate stone.

She sat motionless, not hearing a word of the sermon, steeling herself for the interview which was at hand. What Glenlyon had told her was quite enough to prevent any wavering; but still she was not able to be entirely indifferent to Don Leopoldo. His letters had revived and fed that fascination which had so subjected her when she saw him floating in the moonlight and the whispering leaves beneath her balcony. He had written with a fiery grace, using his own language. He had drawn her portrait as with a moonbeam, till, reading, she felt a poetical delight in herself. He had exhausted the graces of the most graceful of tongues, and still he had not said all. "I bring a ship-load to the gates of expression, and have only a rose-leaf to float it out on," he wrote. "My love and my torment are beyond words. Can you doubt me? Can you, who have made me all yours with a glance and a touch, refuse me yourself? Ah! my Aurelia, you have half immortalized my body even; for where you kissed me on the brow the spot will never grow cold."

These words, glowing and confused in her memory, like the broken flowers we heap together to fling in the path of a queen, seemed to be tossed about her brain as her heart beat, and as the moment approached for her to leave the church.

Yet nothing of this inner stir was visible to the eyes that watched her. Her fair face against the dark pillar beyond it looked like one of those unmoved pearly faces which survive amid the wrecks of some frescos of those ingenious early masters whose pencils, not yet informed by the passions, were dipped in the still white dawn of art. To Don Leopoldo's adoring thought she seemed set in a golden calm, like a saint in an aurcole. He stood and loved her, and it seemed to him that he loved God and all mankind. A beggar-boy leaning somewhat rudely against him, he dropped a hand softly to his rough hair, then

felt in his pockets for a soldo, but could not bear to look and so lose one instant of that blissful contemplation. He and Aurelia would be good to the poor, he resolved, and they would go and hear mass among them as now.

"How they will adore her, my love!" he thought, and his breath came full, quick, and tremulous with delight as he gazed, marking the sweep of the soft hair under the veil which she had learned from the duchess's family to wear. "A bonnet in the country is ridiculous," the duchess said.

At length the preacher came down from the pulpit, and she rose to go out. "Do not leave my side for an instant unless I bid you," she said hastily to Jenny, as the heavy curtain fell behind them, and they stepped out into the sunshine.

A moment later Don Leopoldo had joined her, making his salutations with ill-assumed composure, and waiting impatiently for Jenny to fall behind. But Jenny, obeying orders, clung to her mistress.

"Why have you not written to me?" he exclaimed in French. "What has happened?"

"I am sorry that you should have been kept in doubt," Aurelia replied, keeping her eyes downcast, "but I could not and cannot write to you. I have already made mistakes enough, and been sufficiently compromised. I have only come out to-day to tell you that all intercourse between us must cease. It seemed to me that you had a right to hear this from me, or I should have left it for my guardian to say."

He was speechless.

"It is my own fault, partly, that you have addressed me so," she went on in her clear, low voice. "I have seemed imprudent. I was taken by surprise, and I seemed to encourage you when I did not know what I did. If it has been the cause of your making a mistake, or of suffering to you, forgive me. I don't know what happened to me that night." Her face drooped lower, and he saw the blush that swept over it through her falling hair. "I seemed to have been intoxicated. I am deeply ashamed."

Still he said nothing. His face was white with the sudden revulsion from hope to despair. They had reached the entrance to the Gola, where a road branched away toward the rocks and the villa.

"Let us part here, and try to think of each other kindly," Aurelia

said, looking up at Don Leopoldo for the first time. "Forgive the pain I have unintentionally caused you," she added softly, almost tenderly, "and say good-by."

"Ashamed!" he repeated, finding voice, and imprisoning the hand she offered in a grasp from which there was no escape. "Ashamed, Aurelia, of what was a drop of heaven's dew falling on my soul! Am I then deceived in thinking that there was something of angelic tenderness in your heart for me? Is all that I have hoped an illusion? I thought that you might be my good angel, to keep me from sin, to help me to dedicate the rest of my life to good, to make heaven possible. And you—you are ashamed!"

She dropped her eyes to hide the tears in them. "Not if you take it so," she said. "If my forgetfulness, which the world would judge harshly, is sacred to you, then I will not regret it. But nevertheless we must part."

"For a while, if you command it," he said, "but not forever. I swear to you, not forever! Never will I give you up till you tell me that you cannot love me,—that I am antipathetic to you. Can you say it, my heart's darling? Can you say it?"

She felt herself failing. "You are making my duty too hard for me," she said faintly, "and you are exposing me to observation."

He instantly released her hand and drew back.

"You do me the greatest injury in making people associate our names," she went on. "All the blame falls on me. I alone suffer. It is unmanly!"

"I will go to Rome awhile," he said soothingly. "But may I not call at the castle before going? I will go to-morrow."

"I beg you not to call," she exclaimed, half turning away. "And I beg you to believe that our parting is final. Good-by."

"I shall call at the castle and take leave of the family to-morrow morning," he said.

"Good-by," she repeated, turning away.

"Good-by; but not forever," he returned.

She made no reply, but hurried on toward the castle.

Jenny, who understood tones, faces, and gestures, if not words, was weeping. "It is too cruel, miss," she said. "I don't see why you shouldn't have him, when he loves you so."

She was full of admiration for her mistress, and of sympathy the lover. Nothing sets a woman up so much among her own set the adoration of the other.

"Jenny, you are not to utter a word of what you have seen," he mistress said severely; and Jenny promised, of course. Who ever replied to such a charge, "I will tell"?

And then came Aurora, who had known what was to happen, and there were a few words of breathless explanation before luncheon. The full account was postponed to that sacred hour of confidence when, prepared to go to bed, the two girls met, now in the chamber of one, now of the other, and, making an ottoman of the bed, exchanged their views of life, their bits of worldly wisdom, their hopes and aspirations, consoling and tenderly inspiring each other, and parting with a kiss, to drop into a sweeter sleep for that interchange of confidences.

Glenlyon was standing in the drawing-room waiting for Aurelia when the two girls entered with their arms round each other. "Well?" he said almost sharply.

"The marquis thinks of going to Rome to-morrow," Aurelia said.

"He wished to come and take leave of the family before setting out, and I neither consented nor prohibited it. His family will be told."

Glenlyon dropped his eyes, looking grave, but said nothing.

CHAPTER XVII.

BOUNTY AND BITTERNESS.

AFTER breakfast the duchess was sitting with the Countess Emilia in her boudoir, a pretty room furnished in white wood polished like enamel, each piece ornamented with a large, single coronet, and upholstered with delicate cretonne having large single red rose-buds on a cream-colored ground. The duchess leaned back in a lounge, and displayed her pretty feet very conspicuously on a cushion. The countess was opposite by a low table with quaintly-crossed legs. There was a tea-tray at her elbow, and she had just taken her companion's empty cup.

Don Leopoldo had excused himself from breakfast, having a headache, his valet said, and the two were talking the matter over.

What can have happened?" the duchess said for the twentieth time. "Pippa slipped out of church after them, and says that they had a long conversation. I would go up-stairs and demand an explanation, but Leopoldo is so stubborn! And since he has known that girl he is simply ferocious."

A tap at the door relieved the countess from the necessity of answering, and Pippa brought her mistress a note: "From Don Leopoldo, durchessa." The mother tore it open. "He is going to Rome toprove evening," she announced. "So far, good! But he warns that in the morning he shall call at the castle. What does it ean? What will Teresa say? The Scotchman declared that he would not admit him; and, if he keeps his promise, there will be a secondal."

Here there was another tap at the door,—the duchess never allowed er servants the privilege of opening the door of her boudoir without **Permission**,—and Miss Melville's maid presented a note from her mistress.

"Madonna mia!" muttered the lady, and, with a terrified face, tore the missive open, but grew calmer as she read. "He has arranged it all with her," she explained, having sent the maid away. "She knows that he is going. She says that he had meant to go in the noon train, but she has persuaded him to wait till evening, as he is to see some friends of hers in Rome, and she expects to hear from them by the noon mail to-morrow. And see how she ends: 'Besides, that will give him time to take leave of the bishop and the people at the castle, which will be no more than civil.' You see, she suspects nothing," the duchess said delightedly; "and, once we are all away from here, there will be nothing to suspect." She stretched her foot, from which the slipper had fallen, picked it up with her toe, rose, and went to her "My dearest Teresa," she wrote, "everything that writing-table. you arrange is perfect. Of course you are to dispose of Leopoldo as you please, and we will follow him on Saturday. I hope that you have ordered tea. Emilia and I have just had ours. When your letters are finished, let us see your beautiful face."

"I am so relieved!" she sighed, going back to her cushions.

"Avanti!" For there was another tap at the door, and a third letter, —not a little card-note this time, but a large envelope ceremoniously directed to her Excellency.

"The Signor Mosè!" she muttered. "No one else would be so grammatical on the outside of a letter. Santa Catarina! What now?"

Glenlyon thought it right to inform her that his ward had an interview with Don Leopoldo that morning and had expressly forbidden his ever again mentioning the subject of love to her; also, that the young man had declared his intention of coming up in the morning to take leave of them before going to Rome, and that he, Glenlyon, did not feel called upon to refuse him admittance for a last visit, and so create talk among the servants, unless the duchess wished him to. He closed by assuring her that his ward would see the marquis only in his presence, and that not a word would be spoken by them in private.

"That delightful old man!" she exclaimed, going back to her writing-table. "He is the most ridiculously truthful and straightforward being I ever encountered." And she wrote him a very cordial note, in her best English hand, on her finest paper, richly and gayly stamped in red, green, and gold, her name enwreathed with arabesques running down the whole left side of the sheet. She would prefer that he should receive her son just as though nothing had occurred, provided the two were not left an instant alone; and she invited his family to come down and dine with them on Thursday, as they would all go away on Saturday.

"The headache is real!" she said gleefully when she was again alone with the countess. "He has a bilious attack, thanks be to God! I must go and tell the duke."

The duke's study adjoined his wife's boudoir, with which it communicated by means of a small door hidden behind the cretonne hangings. The door was seldom opened, as the husband had gradually impressed on his wife's mind the fact that he liked to have one corner of the house entirely to himself. And, as she also had an occasional private colloquy at which it was not necessary that he should assist, the key was kept turned on her side of the door. But this was an exceptional occasion, and, turning the key in the lock, she tapped lightly before entering, opening the door without having received an answer, as people frequently do.

The duke lay half asleep on a wide sofa, a newspaper dropping from his hands.

- "Excuse my disturbing you; but I have good news," she said, and told her story. "The Signor Mosè is really honorable," she concluded; "and even Aurelia has behaved well at last."
- " Evviva the Signor Mosè and Aurelia!" yawned the gentleman, rubbing his eyes.
- "And there can be no doubt that she was in earnest, and that he believed her," the lady went on, "because he has gone to bed sick. It is bile, you see. When my brother Alessandro lost his opera-girl,—she ran away with a Russian, you know,—he went to bed and turned as yellow as an orange. I am so glad!"
- "If you think it a subject for rejoicing to have a son and heir as Yellow as an orange, then I congratulate you," said her husband, leaning back on his cushions with his hands under the back of his head, and his elbows forming an angle at either side.
- "I think it a subject of rejoicing that my son has been restored to his duty, even though he is forced to return by a bitter road," the lady responded with dignity.
- "My dear, that was excellently well said," remarked the duke. "And now, if there is nothing else—"

The duchess returned in high good humor to her boudoir. "Nothing now remains to settle but that annoying affair of Lorenzo's," she said. "The duke thinks that he fell from a horse,—it isn't necessary to tell men everything,—and has given me fifty lire for him. Leopoldo must give me another fifty, and I will send it down to-morrow."

"If you can spare me now to go to Aurora," the countess said, "I shall be much obliged. I see that Miss Melville has come down."

"Certainly. Go by all means. And salute the dear girl for me."

The duchess was in a mood to salute all the world, for the golden daughter-in-law seemed now secure.

The countess hastened out through the gardens, waving her hand-kerchief at a dimly-seen figure in a window of the castle, from which an answering signal waved out instantly. "Dear child! We have only six days more," she murmured, and hurried on up the rocks. She dreaded the long parting that was before them,—the longest they had ever known. She sighed to stay near her daughter in this her

first experience outside the convent, and to watch over the unfolding of that mind that had sprung from her own like a fresh shoot from a broken tree. She sighed almost despairingly for the time when they might be able to live together in a home of their own. She had labored, and hoped, and been patient, and still the consummation was far off.

Aurora ran down to meet her mother at the door, and told her that the Signor Glenlyon would like to speak with her a few minutes at her convenience. "And please go at once, mamma, for I am impatient to know if it is anything about me."

"Oh, no! it will not be about you, dear. He and the duchess have been exchanging notes to-day about the marquis," her mother said, and went at once to the drawing-room, where Glenlyon sat alone, expecting her.

He rose to meet her with even more respect than usual. "I have a good deal of confidence in your knowledge of character, and in your good sense," he began, when they were seated; "but still I have a certain uneasiness in making my errand known to you. I have taken the liberty to enter somewhat into your affairs; and, though I am sure that you will give me credit for the best intentions, I am afraid that you may think the liberty too great."

"Signore, I could not be otherwise than grateful that you should interest yourself for me," the countess replied with cordial readiness, but with a faint misgiving at the bottom of her heart. So many persons, ignorant, though well-meaning perhaps, had wished to arrange her affairs for her according to their own notions, and even to make herself quite over after some hybrid model which had no existence outside their own complacent minds, least of all anywhere in nature, that she shrank involuntarily at the least interference. not believed Glenlyon one of that sort. The nobleness and independence of his mind, and his perfect freedom from vanity and all pettiness, had seemed a security against such annoyances. Yet what if he even, after having bound her by his kindness to Aurora and by Aurora's need of him, should turn to her and say in effect, "You are grateful to me? I ask the proof. It is but a trifle: only your liberty of thought and action; only that you resign all your loftiest aspirations, come down from the height where your soul lives above the meannesses of life, and think my little thoughts, and put on my little bonds, and be a machine of which I will pull the strings. But always, be it understood, you are to continue your songs, and sing even more sweetly than before. You cannot sing so bound? Nonsense! Poets are capricious and full of silly notions. You can sing if you like. The meannesses, the littlenesses, cramp and darken you? I do not know how to pull the strings of such an instrument as you? Poets always think their little tunes the echoes of the choruses of heaven. Apollo was once apprenticed to a swine-herd: why should not you submit to me?"

She had heard it all in effect. Was she to hear it again, and from a source whence it would strike most cruelly?

"It has seemed to me," Glenlyon said with a somewhat hesitating and even embarrassed manner, "that the time might come when you would not care longer to occupy your present position, and might prefer a home of your own, and that possibly you might not find it altogether convenient to realize your wishes. Moreover, I have received from Aurora the impression that this place pleases you, that Sassovivo is the native town of your parents, that you have passed many happy hours in this castle, and that you like to live in the country." He paused, and looked at her inquiringly.

"Your impressions are quite correct, signore," the lady replied, bowing, and thought, "What can he be coming at with this terribly long preamble?"

"I shall probably remain here as long as I live," Glenlyon went on with more assurance. "How long that may be rests with the Almighty. It cannot be very long. Aurelia will probably marry soon and go away. As long as she remains here we wish Aurora to remain with her; and when she is gone, I wish Aurora to regard this as her home, if she herself is content to stay, until she also shall marry." He paused with another interrogative look.

The countess blushed with a sudden pleasure and also with a sudden but half-veiled fear. "You are too good!" she exclaimed.

"If you should be willing—" he went on slowly, and he paused again, as if considering.

"Dio benedetto!" thought the countess with terror; "he is going to offer himself to me! How shall I prevent it?"

"But no," he continued, as if to himself; "that can be settled afterward. Of course you will understand, contessa, that I should not consider myself a sufficient protector for a young girl in Italy. All that will be for you to see to when the time comes. I have only to add this,—that I have taken the liberty to arrange all with the duke, whom I found most friendly to you and your daughter and most happy to serve you, and he has spoken to his son,—I think that he did so privately,—and Don Leopoldo made no difficulty whatever in signing the papers which I hereby consign to you. The castle and garden, just as I have them, are yours from the moment of my death, to be held by you and your daughter as long as you shall either of you live, on the same conditions on which I hold them. It was the wish of the duke to give them rent-free; but, as the proposal was mine, I did not consent. And I trust, contessa," he concluded with a noble air, bowing respectfully to her, "that you will allow me to leave that provision which I have already made in my will for the rent of this place, to be a perpetual testimony of my admiration and esteem for your gifted daughter."

The countess remained silent a moment after he had ceased to speak, but her expressive face showed what emotions held her speechless.

"The rent of the place is a trifle," Glenlyon said carelessly. "Of course, if circumstances should render it desirable for Aurora to receive this little annuity in any other form, she can do so."

The countess found voice. "Signore," she said, rising, "after the Lord Jesus Christ, who has given me the hope of a mansion in heaven, in all my life I have had no other benefit equal to that you now be stow on me and my child. I have no words to thank you. I feel that you, who have read so well my wishes, will understand how glad I am,—how grateful I am!" She spoke hurriedly, in a trembling voice, and, dropping on her knees beside him, before he was aware had taken his hand and kissed it in the midst of a shower of tears and a prayerful benediction.

"There! It isn't worth so much!" Glenlyon said, half laughing, half embarrassed. "You exaggerate. And now go and see if the idea pleases Aurora. She will not like my taking so much of your time."

Going to her daughter's room, the countess paused in the corridor

to wipe her eyes and compose her face before entering. The door was open, and opposite to it Aurora stood facing a niche in which was placed a Parian statuette of the Madonna. It was a present from the duke, given her when she went to the convent and her mother to the palace. "To be a mother ever near," he had said kindly, pitying her grief at this parting.

She was placing flowers about it now,—a few large lemon-blossoms, a carpet of passion-flowers beneath the feet, and tuberoses in a garland on the head,—and she was speaking! "The crown becomes thee, O thou flower of the sweetness of God!" And then, standing back, with her clasped hands hanging before her, she softly sang,—

Tota pulchra es, O Maria, Et macula non est in te.

And, singing, her arms slowly rose like a wreath about her own head, and with a floating motion she began to dance before the statue, and presently danced into her mother's arms.

The countess had not expected her daughter to appreciate as she did herself the benefit which they had received. She was yet too young to know what a refuge a home may be from misfortune, what a basis for effort. She still looked out into the world, like the young bird just learning to fly,—not to the nest, like the weary bird returning at evening to its longed-for repose. She could not even know fully what a relief it would be to her mother, for the countess had tenderly spared her the knowledge of certain discomforts inseparable from her subordinate position with a lady who, though often kind, was often capricious too. There was also the thought that the full possession of their inheritance could come to them only through the departure of Aurelia and, perhaps, the death of Glenlyon, though the countess understood that she need not wait for that. Still, there was enough to rejoice over and be grateful for, and the mother now allowed herself to confess that there had been times when she had found herself treated as a servant, and not a favorite servant, either. "But, then," she added hastily, "persons of that position are often not aware how arrogant You must not be so angry, dear, or I shall be sorry for The duchess is very kind-hearted, having told you. Now forget it. and you know her family have for centuries been accustomed to com-

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mand, and she sometimes forgets the pride and dignity of lesser people."

Aurora had been angry and distressed, but consoled herself with the thought of their promised independence. "But, mamma," she said thoughtfully, "it seems to me that one family ought not to command so long. When a family have commanded for centuries, isn't it time for them to stop and give some one else a chance? In so long a time they must have forgotten how to obey."

- "What! my child a revolutionist?" said the mother laughingly.
- "No matter what name you call it by," Aurora went on seriously, still studying the subject.
- "But from whom can you have learned such ideas?" the mother persisted. "Neither in the convent nor from me."

"From nobody, mamma," was the grave and quiet reply. "God folded them up in my soul when he made me. It seems to me that our consciousness is like a long scroll with many seals. these seals with a succession of blows, and, if we look intently within, we read the truth which is the lesson of the moment. night at the villa you defended the poets, and the duchess looked you as if you were a worm which she was about to step on, a great scal snapped in my heart; and I read a golden text there when I ca home and sat by my window, with the stars and the mountains bef me: 'The arrogance of power has no support save in the coward of the subject.' It was there as plain and deep and incrasable as the motto damaskeened with a gold wire into the dagger the duke show us one day. If only those people had spoken that night, they work have seemed strong and respectable. You replied, you all alone first, and immediately they seemed questionable, and weak, and mea and the battle rested with you. I shall always believe in future the Every submissi = ion courage is the only strong thing in the world. makes a tyrant stronger."

"Well, my dear," the mother said, rising, "don't speak to any oelse of these things till you have thought them over a little more."

When the countess went away, she found Mariù standing at the outer gate of the castle, looking off into the town with a vacant a melancholy gaze, and stopped to say a few comforting words to her-

The girl was very reserved, not at all disposed to confide in any one

from the villa, though she knew the countess for a friend. Perhaps the lady's joy transpired in spite of her and jarred on poor Mariù's heart. She listened with downcast eyes, and only muttered a word of thanks, and, when the countess left her, fell into the same gloomy revery in which she had been immersed. Night was coming on, an autumn night, and dark clouds were moving across the sky, catching tints of dull red from the west, where already a large star peeped through their ebon folds.

Mariù was about to return to the house, when she heard her name spoken in a loud whisper and saw Martello issue from a hiding-place mear. He had come up the little ravine, and sauntered along the road as if entirely without intent or business, looking only in fugitive glances where he wished to see, and gazing intently where he was indifferent.

Martello was one of those men whom we now and then meet in Italy, and never without some touch of fear. He was the crude wild creature which, cultivated and inspired, became a Dante. Dark, thin, smileless, laconic, with steady inscrutable eyes that penetrate and suspect but never divulge, they seem to be the victims of some irreparable wrong too great to utter, and ever on the lookout for as signal a revenge. No softness or joy looks out of those set faces, which appear to speak with a certain reluctance; yet they are not brutal. They are, on the contrary, not without refinement. They might be the remnants of some princely race that has been overthrown and downtrodden for centuries, yet that ever retains a bitter and tantalizing memory of its former greatness. The graceful compliments and sunny smiles which spring so naturally to the lips of the other Italian poor are never heard from them. Looking at their furtive, saturnine faces, you feel that they hated you before even they saw you, and see you only to hate you still more.

Such was the man who, having hidden himself at the appearance of the Countess Emilia, now approached Mariù, looking everywhere but at her till he was by her side, then striking her to the heart with his two black eyes. "Renzo wants thee," he said. "He is going away." His voice was strange, as of one used to long silences which had left the throat rigid.

"Where is he going? How can he go?" she cried.

"Thou art to keep silent," the man said, his eyes immovably fixed on her face. "He wants thee to come down."

Mariù struggled a moment between passion and prudence. "Well, I will come," she said then. "Go back and tell him that I will come at once."

Martello turned away without another word, and in a minute was out of sight. Mariù went to the house to take in some clothing that had been put to air on the great terrace. She had already been twice to see Renzo that day, and her heart was sore. She had found him morose and gloomy, thinking ever of his disfigured face.

"I can never go out with thee into the street, as we used to talk about," he said. "Thou wilt go to the fairs and dances, and I shall have to hide my face in the hedges and behind the stone walls. It would be better for thee to marry some one else."

She had done her best to comfort him, and had even represented him with trying to get rid of her, till he had declared that he thought only of her, and would still marry her if she was willing. But she had left him with a dull pain in her heart.

And now, the clothes gathered up from the terrace, either her head grew dizzy, or her eyes were dim, or something caught her foot, she knew not which, and there was the sound of a fall, and Gian and his wife ran out, to find Mariù lying senseless at the foot of the terrace stairs, with her head against the stone wall.

Instantly the house was in confusion; a surgeon was called, and remedies applied. No bones had been broken, and only a few bruises were visible; but Mariù sat on the sofa where they had placed and still supported her, her arms dropped like dead arms, her face slightly tinted with violet color over its pallor, her eyes wide open, bloodshotten, and immovable, and her breath coming in a succession of faint moans of which she was entirely unconscious. She saw and heard nothing, and the bright lamp passed before her eyes produced no least movement of the balls or tremor of the lids.

And so she remained for an hour, with a dozen leeches drawing her blood. The surgeon had ordered bleeding, and Giovanna had run for the bottle of leeches which she kept constantly by her, she and Gian using this simple remedy for all the ills their flesh was heir to, and thriving on it.

When the disgusting creatures had dropped off, Mariù moved, presently began to weep hysterically, and after a half-hour was quite her-

self, except that her head felt a little tondo, she said. The next day she would be about her work quite as usual, with a slight heaviness in the head, and a little soreness here and there, but otherwise none the worse for having fallen down fifty stone steps and beaten her head against a stone wall. So much for the fibre of the Italian mountaineer.

When Mariù had recovered her consciousness and was able to stand, nearly an hour and a half had passed from the time she had spoken with Martello, and another half-hour passed before she could quiet the anxieties of those about her and persuade them to leave her alone.

Then swiftly and softly out with her into the night, over the rocks with uncertain steps, and down the avenue for more than dear life. Her head whirled now and then, as if some sudden touch had set it swinging, and her limbs were weaker for the blood she had lost; but her heart's love supplied what was wanting to her muscles, and she did not fail. It was almost nine o'clock when she reached the farmhouse, and as she ran across the yard some one was locking the doors.

Oh, Renzo would not go without having seen her!

She knocked softly, hearing a step inside, and Betta's voice called out the "Chi &?" scarcely waiting for the answer, "Friends. Mariu," before opening.

- "Oh, Betta, don't tell me that he is gone!" she cried.
- "Why didn't you come sooner?" demanded Betta, with that roughness which sometimes covers compassion. "He waited almost an hour. He couldn't wait any longer, for he had to meet Tito Cencio at the cross-roads at eight o'clock. Tito took him in his car. You know he is hardly able to walk. There! there! poveretta!"

For Mariù, sinking on the door-step, was crying as if her heart would break.

Betta sat down on her heels inside the door and put her arm around the girl's shoulder, comforting her as best she could. Renzo was going to a cousin of his who had written that he could find work for him. Mariù ought not to expect him to stay about Sassovivo. He had promised to write and let her know where to find him. He was sorry to go without seeing her.

- "After they had gone out a piece, he came back to me," Betta said, "and told me to say addio to thee and tell thee to keep quiet."
 - "It was Martello who coaxed him away!" Mariù exclaimed amid

her sobs. "I knew when I saw him here that he would do Renzo no good. He is one who never has his place, but always goes sliding about, or stands staring at the world. He is as wild as a wolf."

"Don't talk of him," Betta whispered. "Say that Renzo is got to his cousin and is going to have work, and don't utter the name Martello to any one. There are certain things, Mariù, that are be not said."

Mariù raised her head suddenly, and looked at the woman.

"It is all right, of course," said Betta. "But if the poor do not stand by each other, who will stand by them?"

Mariù wiped her eyes. "He had no money," she said. "See! De have brought him some. Povero Renzo! what will he do?"

"He had enough," Betta replied. "The duchess sent him down something from the duke, and the American came herself and left him so a purse. I don't know how much was in it."

Mariù rose and prepared to go home. "I had a fall down the terrace stairs, was the reason why I did not come sooner," she remarked, tying a handkerchief on her head.

Betta insisted on giving her a glass of wine, which she needed, and went out with her to the road, where they parted. The castle loomed far above her, and she could see a broad yellow light that shone from the double window of the drawing-room, within which sat the family, Glenlyon with the shadowed snow of his hair above the lampshade taking a faint tint of evanescent blue, like a snow-topped mountain at twilight, while his beard sparkled like frost in the light. head leaning on his hand, he listened while Aurora read. She, leaning on the table and steeped in the full light, had her arms half around a large pamphlet book, one of the volumes containing Father Segneri's new translation of the New Testament into Italian. This beautiful translation of the later Scriptures, besides the learning and the literary grace for which it is worthy of all praise, has the further merit that its laborious author, unmoved by partisan bitterness and seeking only for the truth, has given full credit to the learning and zeal of Protestant Biblical scholars, and availed himself of their studies, when he found their conclusions just, always giving full honor where honor is The notes to this translation, which are very full, were read in connection with the text.

A little apart, half in and half out of the light, Aurelia sat knitting a shawl of fleecy white wool. Presently she dropped her work and looked up in surprise at Aurora, then glanced across at Glenlyon, whose face was still hidden; for the reader, pausing an instant, had stretched her hand for a guitar that lay on the table, struck a chord, and was singing instead of reading:

L'anima mia magnifica il Signore, Ed esultò lo spirito mio nel Dio mio Salvatore.

Nor did she resume the reading tone, but, passing with a simple chant through the intervening recital, broke into song again with the prophet as he foretold the near coming of the "Orient from on high."

"The harp would be better," she said, laying the guitar aside. "And the organ is best of all. The Scriptures seem intended to be chanted. And one might dance to them." She had risen, and stood looking down at the page as she spoke quietly. Glenlyon, his head lifted from his hand, which still retained its position, regarded her intently across the soft light above the lamp-shade. "Don't you think so?" she asked, glancing at him.

"Yes," he replied.

She stood a moment longer, slowly closed the book, then seemed to put the whole subject aside. "If you please, I will go and inquire how Mariù is," she said, and went out of the room, softly singing,—

L'Oriente ci ha visitato dall' alto.

"How strange she is!" Aurelia murmured.

"She is inspired!" Glenlyon replied.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OUT OF STRENGTH, SWEETNESS.

THE next morning Don Leopoldo came to take leave of the people of the castle before setting out for Rome. It seemed a simple enough visit, but it set more than one heart palpitating with nervous anticipation.

"Do you believe that he really does love me?" Aurelia asked for

the twentieth time, as the hour for his coming drew near. She was in Aurora's chamber, and Glenlyon was alone in the drawing-room, looking over the morning papers.

"Of course he loves you!" was Aurora's invariable reply. "But, you know," she added at last, "they say that he has loved a great many others, and that rather takes away the charm: don't you think so? Of course"—seeing Aurelia lift her head rather haughtily—"he cannot have loved any one else so well."

"He is coming now!" And Aurelia, who had been disturbed at the thought of finally and at once rejecting so much devotion and such worldly advantages, regained her delicate sweet frostiness at the thought of Don Leopoldo breathing at other shrines the same eloquent vows which she had found so fascinating.

They went out into the drawing-room, and in a few minutes their visitor entered. There was a moment of stiffness, which the good taste and good feeling of the company soon banished. Aurelia became even cordial to this worshipper at many shrines, seeing how pale and serious he was. She asked in the most friendly manner about his movements, told him that they might go to Rome for Easter, and hoped that the duchess would allow them to pay their respects to her there.

But to all his hints and imploring glances she appeared to be entirely insensible. He spoke of the terrace, where it seemed strange that he had never been; but no one invited him to go there. He recalled the time when, as a boy, he had passed some pleasant hours in the garden; but no one suggested that he should go to take leave of that remembered scene. When at length he rose to go, he looked at Aurelia with a prayer in his eyes, which there was no mistaking; but she dropped her eyes without responding, and slipped her hand into Glenlyon's arm. Her cheeks grew slightly paler, but he saw that her mouth was resolute. "Till I see you again!" he said, and extended his hand.

"Addio!" she replied, and gave him her own.

He could not go without a word. "I shall never forget you, Aurelia," he said, entirely regardless of witnesses, holding closely the hand in his.

She withdrew it, and stood silent.



Don Leopoldo turned to Glenlyon. "This is my good angel whom I am now being torn away from," he said. "I leave you to consider if you will do well in withholding her from me. Aurelia, will you not look at me once more?"

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She felt the pressure of Glenlyon's arm, that trembled, and raised her face with a gentle but distant look. "Addio, signor marchese," she said: "I wish you a pleasant journey."

He bowed profoundly, and went out without another glance; and the moment the door had closed on him, Aurelia dropped her head on Glenlyon's shoulder, and burst into tears.

"Courage, my dear!" he said. "You have behaved well."

Don Leopoldo paused outside the door. "Am I to give it all up in this way?" he thought desperately. "Why have I not a horse at the door, and a strong castle where I can carry her off in the good old way? Why did I not tell him that all the world shall not keep her from me?"

He laid his hand on the latch, and stood a moment, his will swinging to and fro. If he had heard a sob, if those eyes had filled a minute sooner, the tears might have been wiped away on his breast instead of Glenlyon's. But he had seen no sign of relenting, and he heard no sign of regret; and, after a brief hesitation, the instincts of one bred to the conventionalities of life prevailed, and he took his hand from the latch and went away. But, as he went, the vision of those pallid cheeks and downcast eyes went with him, telling a story of self-control rather than of indifference. She had withdrawn her hand, but not before he had felt a tremor in it. As he dwelt on these mute signs of emotion, cloud on cloud his dreams built themselves up again, and hope took up her unstable dwelling in them. He would go to Rome as he had promised, wait for the family to follow him, announce the rupture of his engagement with Miss Melville, then come back and demand Aurelia of her guardian. He went that day, leaving his mother so light of heart that she drove up the very next afternoon to call at the castle, and behaved charmingly.

That Aurelia was a little dignified, and not quite sure that she could dine at the villa on Thursday, rather amused her than otherwise. Of course the girl was disappointed; and one must allow for a little mortification, absurd as it was. The dinner came and passed pleasantly

enough, the good-byes were said, the family set out for Rome, and the villa was deserted.

"Any commands for Washington?" Miss Melville whispered to Glenlyon as they took leave.

"Truly?" he asked.

"Truly!" she replied; and there was no opportunity for more.

They went on Saturday; and before the two girls had an opportunity to realize their loneliness, the town was filled with soldiers. The grand military manœuvres were to be performed that autumn in the campagna about Sassovivo, and the stato maggiore was posted in the town for a few days. Every one having a respectable house had been asked to receive, and to the castle had been assigned two officers, a general and a colonel. They would sleep there only, the officers' mess being in a large apartment in the sindaco's palace.

There was no time for dreaming over imaginary sorrows in this gay bustle. Soldiers were everywhere,—gay young officers, and gray and sober ones, going about by twos, and threes, and groups, or seated outside the café, or lounging about the steps of their hotels or lodgings. Orderlies ran with letters, or were seen at early morning laboriously blacking boots, and flirting with servant-girls as they led horses up and down with a monotonous click-clack that echoed in the once silent streets.

The young ladies of the town appeared in their finest array in balconies, or walked out, smiling and airy, on the arms of their fathers and brothers, and beamed bewitchingly on the officers.

All the young men in town, both high and low, lost their temper and appetite. They felt like barn-yard fowl beside these trim, shining, tight-jacketed, gentlemanly, peremptory, gold- and silver-corded idols of their idols. Even at the castle the feminine heart was not insensible to these warlike glories; and not only was Jenny constantly seeking excuses to show her pert, pretty face in the street, and Giovanna slightly black in one eye in consequence of an engagement with her husband, in which she won possession of the market-basket and with it the privilege of making the daily purchases in the town, but the two young ladies peeped over the railing at their guests when they came in at night, and tried to distinguish their faces, and went into their chambers by day to wonder over the maps, that were sometimes

cut into little squares, and the printed forms of reports of combats, and even, with a laughing audacity and half afraid and shocked at themselves, to see what sort of tooth-brush might have the privilege of touching the mouth of a general, and how the colonel had splashed the water about him in washing, and had thrown the bed-clothes almost into the middle of the room on rising in the morning. The excitement and newness of everything raised Aurelia nearer than usual to the level of her companion's spirits, and the two together committed a score of innocent follies which they would have been greatly ashamed to have been caught in.

Then, to hear the spurred heels coming up their quiet stairs at night, and the rattle of a sword in the room next to their doves' nest,—it was a new sensation. There being but one spare bedroom, Aurora had insisted on giving up hers, Madonna and all, and occupying a sofa in Aurelia's chamber. Nothing could please her better, she declared, than to have the room consecrated by every variety of noble influence; and as the elder Glenlyon had painted there, and left his mark in occasional touches of color or charcoal sketches on the walls, it would now be a delightful variety to have a soldier, with his glory and his top-boots, to knock off, perhaps, a bit of plaster with the hilt of his sword. And so, half laughing and wholly in earnest, she had won her point, and the colonel, with his glory and his top-boots, walked about with ringing heels, and thoughts engrossed in studying the order of violence, where she with soundless steps had danced before the Madonna and with gentle, harmonizing thoughts had sought to find everywhere the poetry of love.

As yet the girls had not seen their guests. Glenlyon alone had received them, and for two days they were off with the early morning light and came in late at night. The greater part of the camp had not yet come, having been stationed beyond the mountains. But on the morning of the third day they saw the shaven wheat-fields below the town all bloomed out in a white flower of tents, the duke's olivetrees curled their peaceful smoke over rows of glittering rifle-barrels and bayonets that flashed a thousand lightnings in the sunshine, and bugle-calls rang clearly through the sweet, fresh air.

They were on the terrace, admiring the view, when an unusual stir in the long street visible beyond the Gola attracted their attention. People were pulling in the rags that had been hung out of the windows to air, and scrabbling out of the way any unsightly object which might be in the street, and there was visible a group of officers in the distance far up the main street. At this hour, with the camp all astir below, the town had resumed its almost deserted look, and this small group of officers on foot, who were immediately joined by two standard-bearers, were almost the only persons in sight.

"Evviva il re!" cried out a piping boy's voice. In fact, the king, passing from one part of the encampment to the other, had come unexpectedly to Sassovivo for a half-hour's visit, and was walking through the town, dressed as an officer, and accompanied by his brother Amedeo. The sindaco had rushed to the rescue of the city's dignity with an excitement which had not left him an inch of breath, and two standards had been got out as by a miracle. As yet there was no further demonstration.

The two girls flew down-stairs, got themselves out of their morning-dresses and into street-dresses in a twinkling, caught on their veils alla meglio, snatched each her gloves and a fresh handkerchief, and set off running, with Gian and Jenny at their heels.

"My God!" cried Aurora, stopping in the Gola (the "Dio mio!" does not shock one in Italy), "I have come out in my yellow slippers!"

"Nobody will notice you," was the not very complimentary reply. "Come! It is too late to go back."

And on she ran, shod like the morning under her flying black skirts. The king and his suite had gone into the cathedral midlength of the street to see some ancient frescos of which the town boasted, and everybody was scampering. He had entered by the front door, and would leave by a side-entrance to pay a momentary visit to a college connected with the church. As yet not a note of that martial music with which the unfortunate great are so pitilessly deafened wherever they go had sounded. But the boys' band, dressed in hot haste, ran from every direction, buttoning their jackets as they came, their instruments under their arms or between their teeth, as might be, and placed themselves at the entrance to the college court. "Oh! where is the bass drum? Brigante! he has stopped to eat something! He is always eating something. Madonna! we can't play without a

drum!" And the boys gave a succession of compliments to the absent tambour which did credit to the vivacity of their feelings.

The town band came hurrying down the street, all full-grown men, and very red in the face,—a color which was brought out in high relief by their uniform of pale blue and silver and white feathers.

Jests went about the crowd, that increased every moment,—that pleasant crowd of Italy, where elbowing rudeness is almost unknown. The tardy bass drum came at full speed, panting and sucking his teeth, and was saluted with a torrent of gibes. Then, "Here they come! Evviva il re! Evviva il re!" and the town band burst into music, and all the handkerchiefs went into the air, and a hundred questions with them: "Which is Umberto? Which is Amedeo? The one who puts his hand to his cap is the king. He is dark, like Vittorio."

The Italian people almost invariably speak of their first king as Vittorio, without title or compliment.

Any sovereign is in these days a possible hero of tragedy, and interesting on that account, if no other; and to these early kings of Italy must ever attach the supreme interest of having cut the Gordian knot of the temporal power of the Popes, which, humanly speaking, no Pope could ever have voluntarily resigned, his inaugural oath obliging him to sustain it; and this, though it was plain that Italy and the world had long since had more than enough of it, and that Christianity was enduring in its unwholesome atmosphere that lingering agony of an immortal being which can suffer but never die. King Victor and King Umberto, with their governments, have taken all the odium and peril of clearing away this gigantic stumbling block in the way of religion; and if they have not yet been sufficiently thanked by the Christian world, it may be because God, whose instruments they were, has reserved for himself the gratitude of a later and wiser generation. Seen in this light, King Umberto was a man to look at with all the eyes by those who are capable of appreciating greatness in advance of its fame. And, looked at artistically, a king of Italy is a king of Olympus.

The two girls left the crowd, and took their posts on a high step at a distance, near where the horses of the royal party were waiting, that of the king conspicuous for its scarlet saddle-cloth nearly covered with silver. Here the king came and mounted; and as they waved their

handkerchiefs, he saluted them, holding his hand to his cap while looking steadily at them for a moment.

They made a pretty group. Standing above a crowd of the populace, their faces close together, half supported in each other's arms, smiling and blushing, with their handkerchiefs waving out above their heads, they were charming enough to justify even a king's admiration.

"Wasn't it a success!" Aurora panted breathlessly, as they ran homeward when the cortège had passed. "He looked at us,—at our very selves!"

"He looked at you, dear," said Aurelia.

It was true. And the king had murmured to one beside him, "That girl could lead a regiment into battle." And well he might say so. Rosy, brilliant, beautiful, with the dark hair pushed half over her lovely brow, and her arm, half bare and white, holding the fluttering handkerchief above her head, she was more than a mere beautiful girl; for looking into those eyes one could see that they saw beyond the crowned man and the rustic pageant a vision of empire and of a consecrated life.

The momentary excitement passed, and the town grown still again, Aurora went out toward evening to the cathedral, accompanied by Mariù. A novena was being held there for some festa, and she wished for the benediction; and, besides, she longed to approach her absent mother in the only way possible to her, by approaching that divine centre from which all being radiates. He who touches a sunbeam touches the sun; and he who touches the sun is in connection with its uttermost radiant influence: therefore he who touches a sunbeam is in connection with everything on which the light shines,—which is the syllogism of union in God.

The cathedral was a dingy church, but, being lighted only from the roof, was both picturesque and devotional at this hour. With that beautiful glow over the richly-colored frescos of the ceiling, and soft reflections in the dusk below, nothing could be distinguished as a defect. A large chapel ran out at right angles with the left side-aisle, and near this was an altar blazing with lights. The chapel itself was dark, with only a soft star of light in the centre.

A soldier was kneeling at the *prie-dieu* before this chapel, his tall form wrapped in a military cloak of a soft blue-gray. A rich reflection

from the gold-colored mantle of some saint in the ceiling fell over a fine head, with its closely-cut chestnut hair, and around a pair of broad shoulders. His elbow rested on the desk before him, and his hand supported his head in a thoughtful rather than a praying attitude.

In passing him, Aurora walked more slowly, and turned her face his way with a surprised feeling of kindness and sympathy. She was touched by the sight of a soldier in that place.

This soldier, a Piedmontese colonel, remained at the prie-dieu when the others gathered about the lighted altar and joined in the prayers. He gazed fixedly into the dark chapel with its star of light, and thought of his mother, just dead, and not yet buried. The letter announcing his loss had been given him by his orderly that morning just as he was mounting his horse, and he had read it in the saddle. All day he had been attending to his duties; and now, at nightfall, he gave an hour to sacred love and sorrow.

Colonel d'Rubiera was the youngest and only surviving of five sons brought up by their widowed mother in that stern virtue and simplicity which made some families of Piedmont resemble the typical New-England family of a former generation. Though noble, they were not rich; and the crown of their nobleness was the dignity with which they bore their cross of cultivated and generous natures in straitened means. The colonel's father, the Cavaliere d'Rubiera, was the son of another cavalier of the same name, who had married a sister of the Duke Cagliostro, father of the present duke, to her family's great displeasure. They had looked higher for her. The colonel was, consequently, the duke's second cousin; and, still more, he was, after Don Leopoldo, the next surviving heir to the title and estates of the Cagliostri. Don Leopoldo has already spoken of him as the "rough-shod Piedmontese colonel" whom his mother hated.

Aurora and Mariù knelt close to the altar. The service approached its close, and all the congregation joined in singing the "Tantum ergo," when among the shriller women's voices there rose a musical baritone, modestly restrained in volume, but still seeming to carry all the others. Singing with a grave expression, and pronouncing fully every word, this voice had yet an exquisite grace, and nothing could excel the firm, smooth finish of every verse it sang. There was all the ease of that cultivation which goes to the utmost point where voice

and soul can go together, and all that expression which is lost when singing declines from over-cultivation into the region of mechanics.

"Mariù, look and see who is singing so beautifully," Aurora whispered in a pause of the hymn.

"It is the officer before the santissimo," Mariù replied, having already looked on her own account.

At the "Genitori genitoque," the voice began again; but, after pronouncing the words which spoke of praise and gladness, it broke suddenly and dropped into silence.

When Aurora left the church, the soldier was still kneeling there; but his head was so bowed into his hands that she did not see his face.

That evening one of the officers lodging at the castle came in early, while the family were at dinner, and shut himself into his chamber. The servants did not see him, but heard him go up stairs.

"He might be sick, and want something," Glenlyon said, and bade Gian question the colonel's orderly.

No, the man replied; he was only tired, and had to go out very early in the morning. There was to be a mock battle the next day.

With early light all the officers were away; at seven o'clock the skirmishing began, and by nine the action had become general, the principal point of attack being a small height and a pass across the plain from Sassovivo. The distance, and the many intervening trees, rendered it impossible to see the battle clearly from the town, even with a glass; and as they stood on the roof-terrace in the mellow sunshine, Glenlyon smilingly said to Aurora that they must trust to her second-sight for a description.

She accepted the challenge gayly, declared war with Austria, named the commanders, and described the action in a series of vivid pictures. She saw the charge on the batteries even before, with a burst of white smoke against the sunshine, they woke the echoes of the blue Apennines beyond, and of the gracious hills that lay around their rocky bases. When the smoke had grown to a white cloud that veiled all the contested height with its increasing folds, and the fierce and rapid explosions were rolled into one continuous thunder, she pointed to a single snow-white cloud, that, sailing across the sky, seemed to have paused above that strange cloud of the earth. Risen from dewy gardens and solitary fountains and sunny streams, she described it hang-

ing like a lily in the air, cool and sweet, while the genius of Italy bent over its rim to drop a wreath on some brave, fallen head.

And there she stopped abruptly, remembering the soldier she had seen in the church the evening before, and how his voice had broken and dropped silent in the singing. "I cannot play at war," she said: "it is too serious." And, leaving Glenlyon and Aurelia together, she went apart, and, leaning in a corner on the parapet, watched the distant combat with deepening thoughts and still profounder feelings.

All along the fresh campagna, bright with recent rains, the thin blue rifle-smoke was curling, and in intervals of the slackening fire of the batteries were heard sharp, small, individual echoes, reducing the grander terrors of war to a vision of broken hearts, and of thousands of nameless dead for whom nature alone weaves her obsidional crown of grasses.

When at length Aurelia came to call her, she turned a face that was perfectly colorless. "I know now what war is," she said. "These signs were enough for me, and I have seen it all!"

CHAPTER XIX.

LA PAURA L'È FAITA D'NEN.

THAT afternoon the two girls went to the sindaco's palace to see the troops return to their camp by a road invisible from the castle.

This palace was one of those strange piles possible only in a mountain-city. Its front of forty windows on a line promised a structure of immense capacity; but, in fact, these front rooms were all there were of any consequence. Behind them were only corridors and a few small rooms, with the two chief antechambers. The palace was a mere line, braced against the terraced gardens that rose behind at the level of the third story by four or five backward-running wings containing only kitchens and store-rooms. Between these walls and the gardens were several courts, which, seen from above, looked like immense wells; weeds grew in their damp crevices, and at evening bats went whirling about them in a premature night while all the flowery

terraces were yet rosy with sunset. There were a dozen different slanting roofs to the palace; but over the end where the sindaco lived was a large terrace, with a smaller one beside it. The company was assembled in the large terrace. Across the entrance to the smaller one a bar had been placed, as though it were set apart for some purpose.

Our young ladies were received with graceful cordiality by the sindaco's wife and pretty daughters. The signora offered them tea, much to their surprise. The lady's mind was yet so dazzled by her intercourse with the duchess that she was semi-blind to the normal custom of her own society. All the ladies accepted the cups offered them, though few of them had ever even seen the strange beverage before, and one could see them making private depreciatory grimaces to each other and slyly emptying their tea into the water-spout. The sindaco, laughing at what he called his wife's English modes, offered wine, and both, with an air of pride, dispensed wedges of that simple cake called pizza, which Italian country-people, little used to sweets, make only on festal occasions. One is always expected to make a little admiring exclamation when the pizza appears, much as when the baby is brought in.

It was a pleasant gathering, gay, cordial, and somewhat noisy. Aurelia, not able to talk with any one except the host and hostess, who were busy, looked about and criticised from an English point of view, with that pleasing consciousness peculiar to her nation that it is the only proper point of view, which is the prime secret of their That this graceful and excellent digestion and rosy complexions. gracious people make themselves merry over insular reserve and stiffness, and call Englishwomen "fountains without water," did not disturb her tranquillity. She found them very loud-voiced, and she thought that the young girls were greatly wanting in modesty and respect for their superiors. The perfectly confident and voluble manner in which they talked, especially to gentlemen, in the presence of their silent elders and superiors, rather shocked her previous notions of their nun-like education. Apparently, those wonderful restraints of which she had been told were needed by these bold and eager young women. Still, she could not deny that there was something pleasing in all the gay compliments and flatteries which were, at least, not unnatural, but only nature in issimo.

Presently a group of officers appeared on the terrace, and after a

few minutes the sindaco brought one of them and presented him to the bella Inglese, as they already called Aurelia. "The General Pampara," he said, "who has the pleasure of being an inmate of the signorina's house. The signor general speaks English."

Aurelia blushed and smiled very prettily, and most certainly with a delicate sweetness of which the young ladies about her showed no sign; and the officer, a short, stout, gray-haired man, who some way gave one the impression that he had been born and brought up on horseback and might be expected to die in the saddle, bowed with the most perfect courtliness, and remained uncovered till she begged him to put on his cap. In fifteen minutes she had him as perfectly fascinated as a respectable elderly married man devoted to his family could or ought to be with a respectable young lady.

Aurora had withdrawn herself apart when the officers appeared, with something of that timidity with which a hero-worshipper looks upon her heroes, and also with the involuntary feeling that she should not meet strange gentlemen without a chaperon. One or two ladies had pushed aside the bar put up across the entrance to the smaller terrace and gone in there. She followed them, and, leaning on the parapet overlooking the street, watched the company. She had seen among the officers the tall soldier who had sung in the church, and she soon perceived that he had the air of having come there against his will and of being very little in harmony with the company.

In fact, while Aurora looked at him, he was excusing himself to the Signora Passafiori, who wished to present him to some of the ladies. "I really do not feel equal to it, cara signora," he replied. "And, to show you that I am not uncivil or capricious, I confide to you the reason. I heard yesterday morning of the death of my dear mother in Torino. Please do not mention it. And please allow me to be silent, and to withdraw as soon as I can do so unobserved."

The lady at once and with the greatest kindness expressed her sympathy, and left him to his musings.

Yes, it was really the same, Aurora thought. There was no mistaking that head and those shoulders. And the face harmonized with them,—deep-blue eyes of the North, chestnut hair and moustache, a noble and rather haughty face that looked about with an air of which the boldness was pleasing, being untainted with insolence, but frank

and full of courage. A slight shade of sadness hung about him,—that touching sadness of which the person wishing to hide his trouble is unconscious.

The Signora Passafiori, having been charged to say nothing about it, was, of course, going about and whispering the colonel's loss to all her intimate friends, when she perceived the ladies in the second loggia. Immediately she ran toward them with a scream, calling upon them to come away. "The floor is not safe," she cried. "There is a broken beam underneath. We put the bar up on that account."

Whether the beam was already giving way without their feeling the instability of their footing, or whether the shock of their sudden start broke the remaining splinter, would be impossible to say; but, as they all screamed and ran, the floor gave way behind them, and with a crash of timber and bricks, and a cloud of dust, was precipitated into the room beneath. Aurora was left alone, clinging to the parapet, with an unstable brick or two under her feet, a gulf of dusty ruins at one side, and the street four stories below at the other. She clung, and felt the world turn round and grow dark, and heard the women all calling and screaming, and Aurelia's voice say, "Oh! Aurora! Aurora! Will no one save her?"

Their voices made her dizzy; but she clung, and shut her eyes against the blinding dust that rose from below.

Then she heard a man's voice speaking clearly and quietly:

"Courage! And hold on. I'll come for you."

It was the first time that she had ever heard that voice speaking, yet she knew to whom it belonged. Opening her eyes and lifting her drooping head, she saw Colonel d'Rubiera at the barrier, with all the company gathered about him. He had taken off his sword and was securing his belt firmly. When she raised her face, he called out again cheerily, "I'm coming! Hold on, and look at me. Don't look down."

She had been about to fall. She grew firm, and looked at him.

The colonel pulled off his riding-boots and stepped out on to the slanting eaves, trying the long curved tiles with his feet, touching them carefully, and holding the parapet. The women began to exclaim, and some prepared to faint.

"Can't you keep quiet?" he said, looking at them savagely.

They became silent on the instant."

Aurora herself uttered a faint cry. He turned to her with an encouraging smile. "Don't be afraid, but hold on, and look at me," he said. "Keep up your courage! 'La paura l'è faita d'nen.'"

"He is Piedmontese," she thought, and recognized the proverb, "Fear is made of nothing."

He came slowly and carefully along the unstable way, trying the tiles with his feet, and now and then trying with his hand the fragments of brick and mortar left inside above the cornice of the room below. Aurora kept her eyes fixed on him, and waited, pale but quiet, for him to save her. When, half-way across, he glanced at her, she smiled.

"That's right!" he said in a low voice, as if to himself; and repeated, "La paura l'è faita d'nen." He reached her. "Hold on! Hold on, and keep cool," he said; but his own face grew pale, for the turning was difficult, and they must now both cling to the parapet, and not only watch their footing, but see that their hands did not interfere. "Put your left hand into my sword-belt, quite well under,—so. "Hold well with your right hand to the parapet, and try every step before you make it. If the step is insecure, hang on to my belt. If I slip, let me go. Now!"

"If you fall, I will throw myself down after you," said Aurora.

He did not reply. Step by step they went on their perilous journey, Aurora sometimes having for an instant no support but the soldier's belt and her right hand on the parapet, and the soldier slipping more than once on a slipping tile. The company stood mute and pale watching them, and perhaps not one of them but uttered a fervent prayer in that moment; and down in the street another crowd was watching them, and the windows about were full of faces.

They reached the great terrace, and some one helped Aurora over the low barrier. She had not removed her eyes from the soldier's face since first he spoke to her, and she stood there in safety looking at him still.

"I think you'll know me when you meet me again, signorina," he said, laughing joyously. "And, now, don't faint. Hadn't you better take a little of the wine the signora is offering you?"

She shook her head and stood smilingly receiving the congratulations

of the company, which crowded about her. She and Aurelia, embracing, kissed each other in silence.

The colonel put on his boots. "With permission, ladies," he said coolly.

"And, mamma," the sindaco's wife's daughter said to her afterward, "he had on the most beautiful bavella stockings, color bordeau, with three white stars on the instep."

Aurora stood there with an indescribable air of proud contentment, with no sign of weakness, silent, bright-eyed, and only slightly pale. The colonel came to her with a cordial smile. He seemed to take pride in her self-control, as if he had some property in her. She turned toward him with a sweet and graceful reverence. "Signor colonel," she said, and asked his name,—not in the bare English mode, but in the stately Italian: "permit me to ask what is your reverenced name."

"Roberto d'Rubiera, at your service," he replied, bowing.

She extended both her hands in such a way that he could only take them in both of his, and before he was aware of her intention she had bent and kissed both his hands.

"And this," said the sindaco, feeling that he was master of ceremonies, "this, colonel, is the Contessina Aurora Coronari, who lives in the family of the Signor Scozzese."

When the sindaco's wife asked him afterward why he blushed so violently at the instant of making this introduction, he confessed that he had been on the point of naming Glenlyon as the Signor Mosè, so closely had the duchess's surname clung to its object.

The introductions over, with a pretty little grateful speech from Aurelia to the colonel, translated by General Pamparà, the two girls excused themselves and went home.

"Please don't talk, dear," said Aurora softly, when her friend began to speak of what had occurred; and when they reached the castle she only said, "Now, dear, if you would kindly go and tell the Signor Glenlyon everything, I would like to be quiet for a little while." And, going into their chamber, she knelt down by the bed and hid her face.

"Colonel d'Rubiera?" repeated Glenlyon, when he had heard the story. "Why, that is one of the gentlemen here. I couldn't remember his name, and I mislaid his card."

"Wouldn't it be better not to tell her to-night that he is here?"

Aurelia suggested. "She has been very quiet, but I know that she feels deeply. They said that the ceiling-beams of the second chamber were broken by the fall, and that the least additional shock would have precipitated the whole mass down another story. They were only lumber-rooms. But it was too terrible. What if either of them had made a misstep?"

"Let us thank God that they did not, and try not to torment ourselves with imagining what might have happened," Glenlyon replied. "But, Aurelia, I do not think it would be right to conceal from her that Colonel d'Rubiera is in the house. What harm could it do her? Besides, I do not like to manage people in that way. It is always best to tell them frankly all that concerns their own affairs. I dislike the whole system of concealment of anything except those entirely personal affairs which no one else has a right to know. She has a right to know that he is in the house. The affair concerns her more than it does us."

"I only thought of not agitating her any more," Aurelia said, hurt, and even a little offended. "You cannot think that I am deceitful?"

Glenlyon was sitting by the window overlooking the campagna, and Aurelia stood before him, her bonnet in her hand. The sunset light was shining in over them. He had been watching that sunset, and meditating. She had found him very serious, and her reproach made him more so. As she spoke, he stretched his hand to take hers, and drew her nearer.

"I know that you are not deceitful, Aurelia," he said earnestly, "and for that very reason I am the more anxious to keep you from the least stain of untruthfulness. So far as I could, I have trained your naturally-upright mind to honesty, and I shall soon leave you to direct yourself in all things. Of that I have little fear. But I have great fear that you may sometimes be influenced by a poisonous doctrine without knowing how poisonous it is, or what it leads to, because you will see that some very good people adhere to it. Forget what we were saying about Aurora. It is a mere trifle, except that it gives me the impulse to say something to you which you will remember when I am gone." It was the first time he had ever spoken to her of his death.

Tears were dropping down Aurelia's face, and when her guardian paused, and drew a chair to his side, gently impelling her to it, she

exclaimed, "Why should you speak of leaving me? It would break my heart to lose you! Why should you not live ten or even twenty years longer? Oh! it cannot be that you are sick. You would tell me."

"I am not sick, dear, but I am old," Glenlyon replied. "It may be that I shall live many years longer; but I cannot count upon them. When a man has passed threescore-and-ten, it is time for him to set his house in order. I only ask that I may see you married well before I go. Then there will be no further need of me. You will have a safe home and protector."

"My heart will need you!" she sobbed, and bent her head down to the arm of his chair.

He said nothing, but tenderly smoothed her fair hair, and thought of that time when he had found her sobbing alone in her father's descreted chamber.

Presently she raised her head, and wiped her eyes. "You had some wish to express," she said. "I have never disobeyed you, and I never will."

He folded his hands and leaned back in his chair: "I have been thinking, and groaning that there is so little real honesty in the world. I have no commands to lay on you but the commands of God. Beware, my child, of those who explain his commands away. I do not tell you to beware of bad people, such as you know to be bad. Beware of those who seem to be good, and who would try to persuade you that it is sometimes best to do evil that good may come. It is false doctrine. But there are teachers of religion who follow it. Beware of respectable people who compromise with evil. They are worse than the bad. Beware of keeping silence when you see a wrong done. You may not be called on to redress the wrong; but give your testimony. Beware of strengthening the hands of the evil-doer. Even silence may do it. Be truthful. You need not always speak, but, when you do speak, let it be the truth. Speak the truth, act the truth, be the truth. Don't let anybody impose on you by talking of what is womanly and gentle so as to make you false and cold. It is charitable to hate wrong; it is just to condemn injustice; it is noble to despise the ignoble; and a woman is not truly gentle who is not charitable, just, and noble."

Aurelia listened earnestly, looking into her guardian's face. He, speaking slowly and with emphasis, with slight gestures of the hands, looked straight before him, as if at some object invisible to her. The crimson of the western sky threw a faint color over his head and face.

"I will remember," she said. "I will be watchful, and will give my testimony."

"You think that it will be easy?" he asked, looking at her with a melancholy smile. "It requires a good deal of courage, and sometimes the courage that can stand against a laugh."

"I will try, sir," she said.

He laid his hand on her head again. "Try, Aurelia; and God be with you! And now I would like to speak of Robert, if you are willing."

She replied quite readily that she would like to hear what he had to say.

"I had a letter from him this morning," Glenlyon went on. "He will come here to see us, if I advise him to come; and I cannot advise him till I know something of your mind."

"Since you began to speak to me to-day, I have made up my mind to marry him," Aurelia said tranquilly.

A joyful light sprang into Glenlyon's face. "Are you fully willing?" he asked. "Recollect, I have not asked you to make such a decision, and I do not wish you to decide hastily when your feelings are moved. I will not hold you to this sudden promise. Take a day to think. I do not deny that some other good man may present himself, and that you might be happy with him."

"My mind is fully made up, sir," his ward replied. "I have a sincere affection for Robert. And," she added, blushing deeply, "I already feel the danger of romantic fancies; and I confess that since you have been speaking I have thought that I might have prevented all that folly of Don Leopoldo."

"You have made me happy, Aurelia!" Glenlyon exclaimed. "You have made me happy!"

As he spoke, Aurora stood in the door, hesitating if she should enter; but when they called her she came smilingly forward and received Glenlyon's congratulations. She had regained all her rosy color, and was radiant with beauty. Her eyes opened wider, and she drew

a quick breath, when they told her that her hero of the afternoon was an inmate of their house; but she was proud and pleased. "What a coincidence!" she said. "And to think that he should have my room, too! I shall always like it better after this."

"And now," Glenlyon said, with an air of unusual cheerfulness, "I must write a note, which he may find when he comes in, and Aurora shall herself go and leave it on his table. I shall write that I amwaiting an opportunity to thank him for rescuing her so promptly."

The two girls brought the writing-table to the window for him, and withdrew to another window to whisper together while he wrote; and there Aurelia confided to her friend the promise she had just made, and received her affectionate congratulations. When the note was finished, and had been read aloud for Aurora's approbation, she took it to the colonel's chamber, and laid it on the table where he would see it at once on entering. Then she stood and looked smilingly about the room. Could she do nothing for him? Everything was in order. The window stood open, and a bright light was reflected in from the white rocks of the great northern mountain, and the villa lay in rich and tranquil beauty below. The autumn rains had come in September, and from the first of October the weather had been a golden legend, each day and every night something to be studied and wondered over, with their suns and moons and stars, and their rich glooms and miraculous airs and atmosphere. Now, early in November, there was still a warmth and a verdure and a softened glory that made the earth a fit abode for the gods, and a charmed silence that it seemed no common sound should break.

Seeing nothing else that she could do, Aurora knelt down and said a prayer for the soldier, repeating it before the crucifix and before the Madonna. "The first time that his life shall be in danger, may some great and unexpected help come and deliver him!" That was her prayer. And then she brought out a rose-colored vase, and filled it with olive oil and water, and lighted a floating wick on it, and set it in the niche before the statue, careful to place it so that the light should not fall on the head of the bed and so, perhaps, disturb the sleeper.

"Ave, Maria! that light is to make you remember," she said, and, having given one more smiling glance around, went out of the room

content, feeling as though she had done something for him. She had observed two letters on the table when she laid hers down,—one an open letter with a black border, the other unopened, a small, dainty-looking note, that lay face down, with the coronet of a count at the back stamped in crimson.

That evening their officers came in early, while the girls were singing at the piano after dinner and did not hear them; and they had brought the Bible, and gathered around the centre-table for their evening reading, when Gian came to say that the gentlemen begged leave to pay their respects, as they were going away the next day.

The general entered first, followed by the colonel, whose head was visible above his superior's.

Aurora had already written to her mother that Colonel d'Rubiera was as tall as Adam, who was as tall as a palm-tree, according to Mohammedan legend.

When the first general compliments were over, he listened attentively to Glenlyon's slow and almost tremulous declaration of the esteem in which they held Aurora, and the grief it would have been to them if any harm had come to her, and replied simply, but with no pretence of making light of her danger or his rescue.

Then, turning to her with his pleasant, lordly air, "Well," he said, "you have not fainted, nor had hysterics, nor shed any tears?"

"There has been neither fainting nor screaming," she replied. "But I have cried a little."

The general took a place near the table; the colonel was beside Aurora.

"I am more afraid of fear than of anything else," he said. "I have known people to die of it, to be ruined by it, to become despicable under its influence. It is easier to overcome than one thinks, is it not?"

"You know how to inspire courage," she said. "I felt a sort of magnetism this morning, and I should have been ashamed to have you see that I could not command myself. You see, it needed a motive outside myself."

"When I was a boy," the soldier said, "my mother gave me a rule as a motive of self-discipline: Never take, even for a moment, a lower place in the scale of being than God meant you to occupy. Of course,"

he added hastily, "you know this rule as well as I do, and, I do not doubt, act on it much oftener." An expression of pain and bitterness showed momentarily in his face. Then he smiled. "But reiteration deepens our sense of truths, don't you think so?"

She bowed.

"And of falsehoods too," he added, half aside, giving his moustache a pull.

General Pamparà observed the open book on the table. "You were reading the Bible," he said. "I never read it; but I have heard that it is interesting."

"It is interesting," Glenlyon replied dryly.

"Vittorio Alfieri, who was a relative of my mother, wrote a tragedy on a Scripture subject," the general went on, utterly unconscious that he was shocking any one. "He called it 'Saul.' It is said to be fine I am no judge of literature. My mother said that he searched out all the information to be had on the subject."

Glenlyon changed the topic to one on which the general might be more at home. There was a copy of Alfieri in his book-case, and he recollected that the editor, in his preface to "Saul," had mentioned the story of Saul and David as being contained in the First Book of Kings, and had, moreover, insisted on the researches made by the poet, giving an impression that an immense number of newspaper-files and other periodicals had been examined in order to procure every possible information regarding the first kings of Israel.

An hour passed in pleasant talk. The soldiers told campaign stories, and explained the grades in the army as distinguished on their sleeves; and the general gave a rather picturesque account of the taking of Rome: "We were not sure that our entrance would be a smooth one, and were quite prepared for a shower of something rougher than rose-leaves. We knew that between the two extremes of our friends and our foes there was the large mass which is always on the winning side after the battle, but never declares its principles before, for the excellent reason that it has no principles except self-interest. Well, as these were not sure that we should stay a week in Rome, we could not be sure of them, and did not know but they might be stirred up against us in some private way. However, it all passed off very well."

"The Pope and his court lost a great deal, sir," Glenlyon said

gravely. "We must not forget that. A man does not lose supreme power without a sigh. Besides, it was not Pio Nono's fault that he was king of Rome, or that his coronation-oaths obliged him to defend his crown."

"You are quite right, sir," the soldier replied promptly. "I always said, 'Let them talk. It is a sfogo.' And they did talk. Fortunately for us, it was all that they could do. A prior of one of their convents was heard to cry out, 'Oh! I should like to be God Almighty for twenty-four hours!' Don't you see, that man would have died of rage if he could not have expressed himself."

"A Christian priest blaspheme in that manner!" Glenlyon exclaimed. "Shame on him!"

"It was not the Christian priest who spoke; it was the politician," the general replied philosophically. "And when you mix the two, the politician is pretty sure to get the upper hand, and to be a very bitter politician too. Oh, we got cursings and revilings, sir, which would have confused your ideas a little about the preaching. Those non-combatants are very clever with their tongues. I can't explain the mystery: it goes along with that other fact of doctors so seldom taking their own medicines."

"General," said Aurora, her cheeks very red, "do you remember who that Christian bishop was—he who went out of his city to meet Attila coming at the head of an invading army, and, bowing submissively before him, said, 'The scourge of God is welcome'?"

"No, dolce Aurora!" replied the soldier, looking at her with a softened expression. "But I remember that we have both glory and shame in the history of the Church."

The colonel interposed, and asked for some music, and Aurelia gave them a song.

"But Aurora is the singer," she said, rising from the piano. "She can improvise. This morning she described your battaglia finta as a battle between Italy and Austria, and we really became quite excited."

Both officers looked at Aurora smilingly, and the colonel quoted:

'Nemico alla gentil terra del si, Non è chi dice ja, chi dice vui; 'Nemico all' Istro, al Reno, al Tebro, al Po, È la superbia che risponde no. (Inimical to the fair land of si Not he whose word is ja, whose word is oui; But foe of Istro, Reno, Tebro, and Po, Is the proud insolence which answers no.)

"Sing for us," he said. "Sing something of Italy."

Aurora was distressed, almost tearful. "I wish I could!" she said. "Indeed, I would not refuse. But Aurelia ought not to speak of me so. She knows that it was only nonsense this morning, and that I have never composed anything. I am so sorry not to be able to do the first thing you ask of me!" And she looked at Colonel d'Rubiera as if she feared to seem a monster of ingratitude.

He smiled, half amused, half pleased. "Try!" he urged. "Tell us how a soldier's wife should feel when her husband is called away to battle. See if this will not inspire you." He led her to the piano, unsheathed his sword, and laid it across the strings.

She looked at it a moment. "A sword across the strings!" she said, and smiled a little as her fingers hesitatingly sought the keys, then sang:

She sang of joy, a lightsome song, Her fingers gayly swept the keys, Now loud as tempests sweep along, Now like a wind-harp in the breeze,

When up her palace stair there came,
With ring of spur and clank of sword,
Her soldier-love, of glorious fame,
And passed the crowd without a word,

Nor paused until he reached her side, Then said, "My lady, she who sings, Forget not! is a soldier's bride," And laid his sword along the strings.

Mute fell the laugh, mute fell the chord, Hung on her paling lips the breath, And on her heart that unsheathed sword Lay colder than the hand of death.

"Italia calls," he said, "she calls.
The God of battles now invoke;
No longer of the god of love
I bear the light and flowery yoke.

"Look up, beloved! I trust in you,
Who said, when first our love began,
'If man and soldier must be two,
First come the soldier, then the man;

"'But be they ever one in you,'—
Thus, sweet, your stirring charges ran,—
'To God and me forever true,
My soldier nobler for the man!'

"Now sing!" He took his sword again, Her heart uprose, her tears were o'er: She sang her country, and the strain Was fuller, clearer, than before

Italia mia! often hath

The sword thy joyous pastime slain;
But now no string it severeth;

It toucheth but to raise the strain.

O land of song! from east and west
The nations gaze, but find no more
Thy head low hung upon thy breast,
Thy courage faltering as of yore.

For while they listen as thy song
From vale and mountain sweetly rings,
They see thy sword shine bare along
The thrilling tremor of the strings!

As she ended, by a simultaneous movement the two officers caught their swords and held them above her head with an "Evviva!"

"Oh! now I see Italy!" Aurelia exclaimed.

Aurora stood up from the piano with a feeling of exultation. She had sung, however imperfectly. The bird in her heart had uttered its first faint cry, and henceforth her vocation was sure.

They did not seat themselves again, and General Pampara explained that they must set out very early in the morning.

Colonel d'Rubiera was lest a moment with Aurora. "Signorina," he said, "my memory of you will be a beautiful thing in my life. I shall never forget you, and shall at any time be glad if I can do you a service. In a few months you may hear of my marriage. When you hear it, breathe a good wish for me."

Did he dream with that searching glance to convey or to detect any sign of regret? If he did, he was disappointed. Aurora's eyes were clear and frank, though she was serious. "I wish you every happiness," she said, "and I shall always remember you. I have lighted a lamp for you," she smiled, and her eyes grew humid at the same instant, "and that lamp is never to go out."

The soldier drew a quick breath, and a look of inexpressible tenderness passed over his face. "We will make a pact of friendship, as they make a pact of love with the green in Florence," he said hastily, in a light and almost laughing tone, seeming to repress some more earnest word that would have been uttered. "You know how they do it? They divide an olive-spray, and keep it as a token, and when they meet they sometimes challenge each other to show the green and prove that the promise is not forgotten. Will you divide the green with me?"

A soft "Oh!" of joyful acquiescence, with a little upward gesture of the hands, answered him.

"See, then; here is the olive, by good fortune," he said, and gayly, as if it were a jest, took a little plume of flexible fresh young olive from a vase, and broke off the divided point of the stem. How Aurora blessed herself for having gathered that olive-branch with the flowers in the morning!

He held the green toward her: she took one of the points, and they divided them.

"Now, if we ever meet again on earth I shall say, 'Fuori il verde!' God bless you! Aurora, addio!"

He held his hand out, and she placed her own within it. In a moment they had parted friends, having known each other but a day.

The colonel went up to his room, seated himself by the table, and took up the letter with the coronet which Aurora had seen. He had read it before going down, and he sat now turning it over in his hand, and thinking. A picture came up of the writer, the pretty young widow of an old man. How enthusiastic she had been over their battles, over the soldiers, over himself! It had been impossible not to thank her, not to feel a certain admiration for her patriotism, though it had ever seemed but the form and fancy of that noble virtue. He had not sought her except in courtesy; no blame had attached to him;

yet when at parting she fell weeping at his feet in all her beauty and love and desperation, pity had overcome him, and he had promised. "Fool that I was!" he muttered, crushing the letter fiercely in his hand. "She would have forgotten me. It was only a passing passion."

For an instant he sat with his hand clinched, and his face dark and angry, then, with a sigh of patience, began to smooth the letter out again.

"Poor Lauretta! she will not have a very ardent husband," he said, and rose. "And, in fine, I was made for a soldier rather than for a lover. 'Su! Rubiera, su!"

It was an old family motto: "Up, Rubiera!"

The next morning, almost with the night, they were gone. The tents had disappeared from the campagna, the soldiers from the streets, and the town relapsed into its normal dulness. One excitement was, however, left for a very large number of the inhabitants: they could perhaps find winning numbers for the lottery in the events of the week.

Of course they all played "king." King is seventy-six. The servants at the castle played "general," which is ninety; and Giovanna dreamed of two large black cats, which gave them thirty-four.

Of course not one of them won a centesimo,—perhaps they had never won a centesimo in their lives,—but they went on helping Providence to befriend them, and in the mean time helping the government to a few millions coined out of their hearts' blood.

CHAPTER XX.

FORTUNE'S LARGESS

ROBERT McLellan had written to Glenlyon,-

"I am so happy that, to be any happier, I must enlarge my capacity for enjoyment. The thought of Aurelia does not at present interfere in one way or the other. I have neither the delight of being sure of her nor the pain of thinking that I must do without her, either of which would render less engrossing in my mind that one thought that I am at last in Rome, after so many difficulties, with full liberty to devote all my life to Art.

"But I think it better to have the question decided in one way or the other without delay, for two reasons: if Aurelia should pronounce against me, I could better bear the disappointment now when I have a thousand distractions and am only beginning to work; and, on the other hand, if she should accept me, it would make a good deal of difference in my present arrangements."

The plan of an immediate arrangement for the future had occurred to him while he was searching for a studio. Full of an artistic curiosity to see all that was possible of this new life, he had not only looked at, the studios which were offered him, but had taken a house-agent's list, and bought a copy of the "Locatore," a weekly folio devoted entirely to advertisements of every sort of tenement, and had passed several days in looking at houses and apartments. Among the places he had visited was one which, though not very highly prized by the owner, struck him as capable of being changed into a charming apartment with a studio attached. The rooms, though rough and shabby, were well proportioned and had both eastern and western sunshine; and a long loft, used as a lumber-room, had all the essentials in size and position for a beautiful studio. Making his way through the dusty rubbish, he looked out of a small northern window upon an enchanting view of the near Tiber,—not too near,—St. Peter's, and Castel Sant' Angelo, with a grand half-circle of horizon shining low between the great mountains. Everything here was rough and dingy; but he saw at once the paradise which might be evoked from such material, and in ten minutes of study his imagination had set up an easel in that pure light, hung pictures about, and seated Aurelia at her work in a low chair near the window.

The vision came and went, but left an ardent longing behind it. He obtained the owner's promise that the rooms should not be let for a week, in which time he could decide. If Aurelia accepted him, he thought, he would take the place at once and begin his improvements. A home is of slow growth. They would make and adorn this together. And at last the thought grew so delightful that he tried to put it away, lest he should be disappointed.

On the evening before he could expect an answer to his letter to Glenlyon, feeling too nervous and anxious for solitude, he accepted the invitation of some friends to accompany them to the opera. It would

be better than tormenting himself with doubts through half the night, he thought, though he had not allowed much space for evening amusements in his plan of Roman life.

It was past midnight when he left the theatre. He said good-night to his friends at the door of their hotel, and went homeward alone. The skies were scintillating with stars, not a soul was in sight, and not a sound reached his ears save that of his own slow and quiet footsteps. The streets stretched out like dry torrent-beds, all the daily stream of life having disappeared from their whitely-glimmering stones. He passed a deserted piazza, where in the soft dusk a fairy stream of water murmured its faint song above the sleepless Triton, like the sad memory of a time when the "floods clapped their hands" about him as he cleaved their blue-green billows and blew the "wreathéd horn" of Neptune.

From thence the street led straight on toward memories of Mæcenas and dear, pleasant Horace; and an abrupt turn brought him to a long piazza surrounded by dark walls and ruins, and in front of a house that had known the sister of that fine old king, Sixtus V., "the ass of the March" (" l'asino della Marca"), as he was called by the other cardinals while he shuffled about among them, meek, decrepit, simple, biding his time, till, the tiara on his forehead, he shook out his lion's mane and terrified them into silence. "The only living man worthy to be my husband," said Queen Elizabeth of him.

Our wanderer slowly crossed the piazza in the silence and darkness, pausing now and then. Darkness? No. For, fair and silver, over the rough outline of the old Baths of Diocletian stole the moon's waning crescent. Silence? No, less. For, with a strong soft rush and rustle, a great column of water was springing into the air and joyously catching at the moon-beams, as if it had been longing and waiting for them, crouched down among the rocks and grasses; and, as it sprang, all round about its foamy head hovered a crown of airy gold, with soft iris-colors floating out and in, and sparkles as of fire. So the divine Light of the World comes out in search of finite appreciation, as if only in the eager, aspiring soul of man could it behold its own close-folded perfectness, and the human heart divines that God is love, as the water-drop first found the iris in the sunbeam.

A solemn single stroke from some neighboring campanile roused the

solitary dreamer. He started, and, going toward the great ruin, unlocked a burred gate that gave entrance to a gravelled walk running along its side. The walk had a vine-wreathed trellis at the right and overhead; at the left was the ancient wall. At the head of the inclined walk a tiny fountain dripped. A rustling of many wings and a half-sleepy cooing came from underneath the vines, where slept a flock of pigeons, all stirring at the sound of a step, then settling to their downy rest again.

Robert opened a door, and entered the studio. It was an immense square vaulted chamber of the antique baths, which Salathiel, with poetic taste, had chosen to fit up as a drawing-room studio, all his marble-cutting being done elsewhere. The light came from a single broad window half-way up the wall, and a stair and platform had been built there, making a small boudoir-loggia that looked out into the piazza of the railway-station. A dusky Judith stood in that halflight. Away in a shadowy corner, only guessed at, a large pallid Eve shrank away from the curse, one perfect hand pushed out against an entering fine moon-ray sharp as a stiletto. Sofas, chairs, and tables were mere blotches of darker shadow; but the moon-ray, moving, touched brightly the keys of an open piano. Facing the window, a strange contrast to the tragical associations of the other figures, a large marble bust of Liszt stood on a marble pillar, the very embodiment of worldly success, at which his mocking mouth seemed to smile scorn-It was a place to dream in, if one would yield. McLellan would not yield. He lay down, and told himself to go to sleep, and to sleep he went.

It seemed to him that he had but just closed his eyes when he woke and found the morning all about him. But for the evening's dissipation, this early sunshine would have found him in a caffè in the Due Marcelli. He dressed hastily, but, before going out, went to an easel beside the Judith and uncovered a picture on it. He had begun this long before in Scotland, and had finished it in Rome only the day before. He called it "The Sweet Singer."

The beholder stood mid-way up a mountain, among mountains. Half the sky behind these rugged heights was radiant with a limpid light, and half darkened by the visibly rolling thunders of a tempest-cloud. Between slope and slope below, half seen, an Oriental town

shone peacefully in the sunshine. On a winding thread of a path a man came running upward from it. In a green nook among the rocks in the foreground a flock of sheep were all huddled about a young shepherd seated there, their timid heads pushed under his mantle, behind his shoulders, and about his feet. The picture was full of a strong wind, though not a tree appeared. The grasses and small flowers bent; the woolly fleeces turned all one way; the shepherd's hair flew out behind him in a wavering flame of gold.

He is young and beautiful, this shepherd. Health blooms in his cheeks, and his skin is of a fairness sun-tinted into gold. You can scarcely see in his softly-dented temples where those golden locks begin to grow. He is strong as well as beautiful. He can fling a stone, as shepherds use, so that it will crush the brow of a giant, and he can slay a lion and take the lamb out of his mouth, and a bear and deliver his prey. With his feet he can run like the wolf when the hunters are on his traces. He is tender and magnanimous. He takes the tired lambs in his arms; and he can forgive a treacherous friend who weeps before him. His voice is sweeter than the nightingale's, than the south wind's, or than the voices of the brooks of spring.

He is good only to tend the sheep, his envious brethren say. They will reproach him contemptuously when he comes to the camp: "I know thy pride and thy naughtiness. Where hast thou left those few sheep?" He is glad to stay out of their sight on the mountain, though he will answer, "What have I done now?"

Nabal, the rich fool, when this shepherd, fainting and flying from his encmies, shall appeal to him humbly by his messengers for food, will fling back the brutal answer, "Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants nowadays who break away every man from his master."

He is David, the avenger, thou fool,—David, the glory of Israel,—David, a man after God's very heart; and Samuel is waiting to anoint him king! His soul is of dew and of a flame, and his heart-strings are a lyre. His songs shall be sung on earth till the silence of the last days shall fall, and be echoed in heaven when the hearts of the Nabals of the earth shall have died within them and they shall have dropped like stones into their place.

His harp in his hands, and the flock about his feet, he is singing,-

His pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, Hailstones, and coals of fire.

The artist must have lived above the every-day world who could paint a picture which could thus carry the spectator back to a time when prophets were upon the earth and rulers were chosen for their strength and godliness. He stood gazing at the canvas and rising spiritually to the level of it. All that he had painted in Rome were a few technical finishes: the soul of the picture was the inspiration of those far-away Northern hours. It occurred to him that technicalities were all that he could learn in Rome, and that the delight of a toolong contemplation of the masterpieces of the past could result only in imitation. They were great because they did not imitate, and the best imitation of them could never possess the force of the original, for the very reason that it was an imitation. It seemed to him that a too-long residence in Italy would do him more harm than good, his first higher enthusiasm sinking to a mere sensuous enjoyment.

"I will stay but five years," he said. "They shall be years of seeing and of study. Then off with me to wrestle with the angel on my own heather. A man's truest inspiration is on the spot where he drew his first breath, and there most peacefully he draws his last."

It was quite a sudden development, rather than change, of plan, and the sight of his own completed work was the cause of it. It often happens that the memory of our own best efforts becomes our teacher in less happy moments.

"I shall not make a fortune," he said, turning away, and he began whistling cheerfully. And then he sang out, to frighten away certain shadows that began to rise,—

O, I has scarce to lay me on,
Of kingly fields were ance my ain;
Wi' the moor-cock on the mountain-bree,
But hardship ne'er can daunten me,

and, opening the door to go out, his song was smothered in a rushing cloud of purple and white wings. Salathiel's pigeons flew at him from every direction,—from the trellis, the little fountain, the great piazza outside, from the sky they had been sailing across. They brought a

breeze with them in their strong wings, and they pressed upon him with a soft stress, and overcame him with their plumy tyranny. Laughingly he west back into the studio for the food which the sculptor kept for them, and as he went they followed him in a stately procession across the floor, their necks glancing in the light, their beautiful wings folded back as smooth as satin. When he had found the grain, and went out with it, they turned and followed him to the trellis walk as they had come in. One young creature, showing an indecorous haste, was severely pecked into a modest behavior by its nearest neighbor.

Robert, having fed the pigeons, went down to the gate and opened a letter-box screwed to the inside of it. It contained a single letter, a small, dainty envelope faintly perfumed with violets. His heart gave a bound as he recognized Aurelia's writing. For a moment he stood hesitating; then he went out into the piazza, and seated himself on one of the benches near the fountain.

For an instant, while he broke the seal, a terrible eclipse came over everything. There was no beauty in heaven or on earth, and life was but the walking on a trembling bridge hung over an abyss. Then nature shone out again, and joy replenished the world.

It was Aurelia who wrote; and we already know her decision. Nor was it more pleasing than the manner in which it was communicated. Having yielded, she did so cordially and gracefully. "I hope that you may be as happy in reading this as I am in writing it," she concluded.

Happy! What, then, is happiness? Is it the effervescence of intoxicated feeling? or is it the melancholy quiet which comes with rest after a struggle? Robert held the letter in his hand, and looked about him. The fountain-jet made a great golden feather in the sunshine, waving this way and that.

"How easy it would be to die!" he thought.

He who has reached the height, long striven for, of a blameless ambition has ever a feeling of melancholy mingled with his triumph, if his soul has climbed as well as his fancy. What he has won, though sweet indeed, is so little, after all, and the higher success of powers strained to their utmost and the stronger for the strain, and the purer, finer atmosphere he breathes on this new level, as yet he can but vaguely

comprehend. He only knows that what filled his soul in anticipation does not fill it in possession, and he does not see at once that his soul has become larger.

Yet it was sweet, and when Robert entered the caffe that morning more than one thought, "How happy the fellow looks!" and smiled in looking at him. Happiness is pleasant to see. Grief is a mendicant; but joy has largess written on its brow.

From the caffè he went to call upon some artists in their studios, and met'everywhere a cordial welcome. Then he went up the Spanish steps and along Via Sistina, stopping to look at the models. Here were all the old familiar figures, pleasant to see, though hackneyed: the women with their black eyes, white head-cloths, and coral ear-rings and necklaces; the beautiful gypsy-colored boys with their long curls; the men with long black or white hair under their peaked hats, their red waistcoats, slender legs in tight stockings, and splay-feet tied up in squares of leather.

From there he went to buy some brushes and colors,—delightful task! How his fingers knew the feel of those pennelli! and how his eyes could see all the myriad possibilities of those pure blues and yellows! He remembered how, as a boy, when he saw the first splash of ultramarine on his palette, the heavens had seemed to open above him.

These purchases made, he went to a trattoria for his luncheon, and found himself in a vine-covered garden, all the table-cloth and plain white dishes and the floor of gravel gold-spotted with a filtering sunshine. He made up an account of his day's expenditures while waiting, exact to a centesimo. He resolved to write to his mother that evening. How glad they would be about Aurelia, and to know that he could live so cheaply!

Then, luncheon over, came the most joyful task of all, saved with cunning thriftiness that he might linger over it as long as he pleased. He went to see the landlord of the apartment he had chosen, and engaged the place on a five-years' lease. The studio must be prepared at once; for Salathiel was coming back. The rest could wait a little while, though he meant to come there at once and live.

After a while he sent the landlord away, and stayed alone in his future home till the sun went down, studying all its possibilities,

arranging everything in his mind. Aurelia and he would choose the furniture together, but he must first make the house ready.

When the sun went down behind the western sea, he knelt and prayed for himself and for his future wife, and gave thanks to God, then went home peacefully.

CHAPTER XXI.

FATHER SEGNERI.

THE next day Robert set out for Sassovivo.

On entering the railway-carriage, he observed a priest there, who, seated in a corner, was looking out of the window. He was a small, white-haired man, and appeared to take no notice of any one, but to be quite absorbed in his own thoughts. Robert seated himself in another corner and imitated his travelling-companion, looked out at the landscape, and thought.

Station after station was passed, and still the priest kept his place; but when at last they arrived at the Sassovivo station, he turned from the window, rose briskly, and prepared to descend. Robert, leaving the carriage first, offered to assist him, and was most courteously thanked. In a few minutes they found themselves in the same diligence. There was no one else; and at length the priest seemed to become aware of his travelling-companion, and looked at him with swift, penetrating glances as they exchanged a few civil remarks. When they reached the town, Robert was too full of excitement to do more than bow a hasty farewell before setting out to find the castle.

The castle was not hard to find. From the piazza where the diligence stopped he could see its dark gate and rough walls across the end of a long street leading westward. He walked slowly down this street, carrying his own valise, to the great grief of several poor boys and men who had hoped to earn a few soldi by carrying it for him, and who scrambled for the chance they all lost, poor souls! It was the hour of afternoon when most people were out, and he received many a pleasant glance as he paused to look at the shops, or the chil-

dren, or at the amusing beaux who marched up and down with all the, air of being in the most fashionable of resorts, glancing at the girls who passed, or attitudinizing before some window, the grace of their pose disturbed occasionally by a pig which ran between their legs, or by a donkey whose mountainous load of dry branches nearly swept them off their feet,—whereupon a black look and an angry word would be flung at the contadino and his ciuco. These ciuchi have the most serene way of walking over human beings, though they turn out for each other. Indeed, there are many ways in which the ass makes it evident that, though he has not, to our knowledge, been heard to utter an articulate word since the days of Balaam, he keeps up a very voluble thinking, and that his opinion of man is frequently anything but flattering. Look at him when some stupid driver with a stick in his hand is trying to teach him best how to pick his way down a rocky mountain-path, and pulling his bridle this way and that, and howling in his ears. See the quadruped pause an instant, and, with a little shiver of impatience and disgust, look round deliberately into his tormentor's face, then, without a word, go on again. voluntarily think that without a word, for the attitude and look were startlingly human and expressed the utmost of contempt. see, too, that for a little while the driver acts as if cowed.

When Robert McLellan reached the court of the castle, no one was in sight. Even in his lover's preoccupation he smiled with an artist's delight at the rough old blackened stones, and the blue vases in their iron rings outside the balcony, where a few pinks still hung to the long trailing stems. He stepped into the hall, and at the same moment Jenny came down the stairs with the tea-tray in her hands. She nearly let it fall as she cried out, "Oh! milud!"

"Hush, Jenny!" he said hastily, but too late. The drawing-room door stood open, and there was instantly a soft rustle of garments, and a light step, and before he was half-way up the stairs a lovely vision had glided into the shadows at the head of them, and was holding out two white hands to him, welcome and joy in her sweet face.

Aurelia re-entered the drawing-room on his arm, and here another cordial welcome awaited him.

Aurora stood apart and smilingly watched them. With what a sunny confidence they looked at each other, as if not afraid that each should read through the other's eyes to the depths of the heart beneath! How transparent and true was their mutual respect! How sure one could be that the same respect and confidence would mark their speech of each other in absence! She could imagine the look of haughty astonishment which would greet the person who should approach one of these with a word reflecting on either of the others. She had heard of friendship; she now saw it; and it was her happiness to share in this friendship, and feel the border of its protecting mantle drawn around her own life.

"Robert must know Aurora," Glenlyon said, holding out his hand to her. "I do not know just what relation she will be to you, Robert, but she is like a daughter to me."

"She will be whatever relation she honors me by allowing," Robert said, bowing lowly.

"How nice of him not to insist on squeezing my hand!" thought Aurora, who disliked promiscuous hand-shaking, and, indeed, almost all hand-shaking.

"The Signorina Aurelia will decide that question," she said. "I cannot be too nearly related to her for my own happiness."

Aurelia was fully and entirely happy. Approbation was necessary to her, and everybody approved of her. The troubled delight of a doubtful romance had lost all its charm. She trembled on remembering how nearly she had become irretrievably compromised. She trembled a little, too, at the thought that she must confess to Robert every circumstance of that entanglement, even to the moonlight delirium of the loggia. Would his face wear the same sunny smile after he had heard the story? The doubt increased his value a hundredfold. It gave him a dignity and authority which he had never before possessed in her eyes; and as her fear increased, her love increased.

They had scarcely settled down to talk quietly, when Gian announced another visitor: "Father Segneri would like to see the Signor Glenlyon, if it would not inconvenience him."

"Oh, Father Segneri!" Aurora repeated, with pleased surprise. "He is a famous man, you know. Mamma admires him very much."

Glenlyon did not hear now for the first time the name of this eminent Jesuit preacher and theologian, and he went to meet him with the greatest respect; while Aurora, waiting till the priest's eyes were turned her way, stepped forward modestly to kiss his hand.

"I fear that my visit is inopportune," the new-comer said, glancing at Robert and Aurelia, who had withdrawn to a distant window. "I recognize here a travelling-companion, and am probably intruding on your first welcome of a friend."

Robert had also recognized the stranger, and came forward with Aurelia to be presented. "Father Segneri came in the train with me," he said. "I am very glad to make his acquaintance."

The priest was soon persuaded that his visit was a favor instead of an intrusion, and became quite frank in explaining his movements. He had come to Sassovivo on business, and would stay probably a week. He had gone directly to the convent, where a friend of his lived,—Fra Antonio,—and had left his valise there, with word that he should return. Fra Antonio was out of town, but would come back the next day.

- "Fra Antonio is my confessor," Aurora said, smiling.
- "You are fortunate, signorina," the priest replied, looking at her kindly. "He is a saintly man. I shall not be able to see him at once on his return, as I must myself go to the Rocca in the morning and may stay over-night; but I expect to find him when I return, the day after to-morrow."

It soon became evident to Glenlyon that the father was only waiting, and that he had finished his compliments to the young people.

- "I think that you should show Robert to his room and see that it is in order for him," he said to Aurelia.
- "Was I right in thinking that you wished to speak with me?" he asked, when he found himself alone with the priest.

Father Segneri nodded, and, though they were alone, drew his chair nearer, and lowered his voice.

- "I was leaving Rome," he said, "and, as I had to come to Sassovivo, I undertook to call upon you at once, on the duchess's account. She is very anxious."
 - "Indeed!" said Glenlyon, surprised. "What about?"
- "You may not know that her son has cruelly disappointed his family in the marriage which they had arranged for him," the priest went on, glancing aside keenly into his companion's face. "The

young lady has left Rome, and will return at once to America, they say."

- "I am sorry for them," Glenlyon replied. "They seem to have had a good deal of trouble with that young man. I knew that the lady was somewhat disgusted with him here, but thought that they moight become reconciled."
 - "He is here, is he not?" asked Father Segneri suddenly.
 - "Here!" echoed Glenlyon, staring.
 - "Yes. Has he not been here this week?"

Glenlyon's brows darkened. "Do you mean to say, sir, that the Marquis of Vannosa has returned to Sassovivo?" he asked, in a manner which had lost all its cordiality and something of its respect.

- "His mother thinks so," Father Segneri replied, quite unmoved, but ceasing his inquisition of Glenlyon's face, where the surprise and displeasure were too genuine to be doubted. "He left Rome about a week ago, taking only a little valise, and telling his valet that he should return the next day. He did not say where he was going, but they have ascertained that he took a carriage to a railway-station a few miles from Rome, and farther than that they have not as yet traced him. His mother thinks that he wished to come here without her knowledge, and therefore went to a small station, where he would not be recognized, to buy his ticket. He had been gone several days before she knew. She supposed that he was keeping out of her sight because she was displeased with him. In fact, it was the valet who, becoming alarmed at Leopoldo's long absence, confessed to her that he was not in the palace."
- "Thank God that Robert is here!" thought Glenlyon, and said aloud, "If Don Leopoldo has been in Sassovivo, I have heard nothing of it, nor have any of my family seen him. Under the circumstances, I think it no discourtesy to the family of the Duke of Cagliostro to say plainly that none of us wish to see him."
- "Are you sure that no one in your house has seen him?" the priest asked quietly.
- "I will assure myself at once, sir," Glenlyon replied, with a haughty air, and, rising, rang the bell.

Father Segneri took out his snuff-box, and tranquilly tapped the lid of it.

Gian appeared, and was bidden to ask the Signorina Aurelia if she would have the kindness to come to the drawing-room a moment; and when she appeared, smiling and prompt, her guardian rose and led her to a chair as if she had been a princess.

Father Segneri took the opportunity to put on his glasses. His experience had taught him not to have any foolish trustfulness, especially where affairs of the heart were concerned, and he was there to know the truth. Besides, the duchess had said of Aurelia all that an angry woman can say when her experience of life has made her acquainted with every possible social intrigue; and, in spite of his knowledge of the lady's character, he had conceived a prejudice against this fair and smiling girl, who might very possibly be a siren.

"My dear Aurelia," Glenlyon said, "Father Segneri says that Don Leopoldo Cagliostro has disappeared from Rome, and that his mother thinks he may have come here. Have you seen or heard anything of him?"

At the first mention of Don Leopoldo's name she blushed slightly, but at the question, which showed her at once the whole situation, she raised her head and cast a glance of proud dislike at the priest, who received it with the utmost tranquillity. One might say that her soft, impotent defiance flew like an angry bird, and was transfixed on the still, penetrating gaze of his eyes.

"I have neither seen nor been in any way reminded of Don Leopoldo since I took leave of him here in your presence," she said to Glenlyon.

Father Segneri was convinced that she spoke the truth.

"Thank you," said Glenlyon. "And now, my dear, will you take the trouble to ask Aurora to come to me."

Aurelia saluted haughtily, with her head very much raised and her eyes cast down, and was about leaving the room, when Father Segneri's voice arrested her: "The signorina must not be angry with me if I have wished, in order to serve an old friend, to ask a question which is not meant to offend any one here."

His voice was winning, his faint smile seemed to say that her anger was quite out of place; but she merely made a slight inclination, and went out without a word.

Glenlyon, who would have preferred to see her more easily mollified,

did his visitor justice. "It is quite true that you are only doing what you may well think a duty," he said. "I wish you to be perfectly satisfied."

And then Aurora appeared, but with a look of alarmed inquiry. She had perceived that something was the matter. Father Segneri smiled at her alarm, which was as innocent as the other's confidence, and himself put the question to her.

"Oh, no, father," she replied, with an expression of relief. "He cannot be here, or we should have been sure to know. I have seen both Chiara, the agent's wife, and the gardener from the villa, to day, and they did not mention him. If he had been here, they would have been sure to know."

Aurora stood near the priest, and as he thanked and dismissed her he extended his hand, and she bent her head and kissed it. His eyes followed her as she left the room, and tears rose into them. Oh, when would she, or any other one of that flock to which he had so long been a devoted pastor, ever again look at him with that transparent and entire confidence? The thought wrung his heart.

Going out, Aurora was met by Aurelia, who waited for her in the entry, and exclaimed, the moment she saw her, "Well, what has the inquisitor found out?" One would not have believed her soft eyes capable of so much anger.

"He has found out the truth, Aurelia; and that was all that he wanted," she replied. It seemed to her that Father Segneri had behaved with a very honorable and gentlemanly frankness in coming directly to them to ask the question, instead of setting half a dozen low spies to watch them and report according to their own baseness.

"Massimo d'Azeglio was right!" exclaimed Aurelia, with unabated anger. "Before making an Italy it will be necessary to make Italians. There seems to be no one here who has even a suspicion of what truthfulness and honesty mean. I promised not to have anything to do with that man, and my guardian promised for me."

"Oh, Aurelia!" exclaimed the Italian girl, and, bursting into tears, turned and leaned her head against the wall.

For an instant Aurelia looked at her unmoved. Her pride had been deeply hurt, the more so that she could not hold herself altogether blameless in the affair. But she felt that her own prompt and entire correction of what was, after all, but a slight and unpremeditated imprudence should have put an end to the subject, and that in that very imprudence she had been more innocent than those who suspected her were capable of understanding. Moreover, such an implied accusation came with a cruel force at this moment, when she had to tell everything to Robert.

Then her heart melted, and she remembered not only mercy, but justice, which was better still. Many are very lavish of mercy who never think of being just. She recollected that Aurora had been as transparent as crystal; and she went to put her arms around the weeping girl, and ask her pardon, and make a dozen explanations of her severity. "And, besides," she said, "it is very true that some of my own people who come here, if they are not as bad when they come, soon learn all the evil there is to learn, and none of the good, and they become worse than their teachers. Dear Aurora, forget what I have said!"

When Father Segneri found himself alone with Glenlyon, he begged him to pursue the subject no further. "I am perfectly satisfied," he said. "Don Leopoldo has probably gone off to amuse himself somewhere, and will return when he pleases. There are a hundred places he might be likely to go to. I told the duchess so; but a mother is not easily satisfied, and I could not refuse to make a simple inquiry, since I was coming here. I thought it best, too, to speak to you instead of another, even at the risk of giving offence."

He did not say that the duchess had wished him to set people on the watch and not to ask Glenlyon.

The subject was dropped, and the priest set himself to remove any unpleasant feeling which might linger in the mind of his host, and succeeded so well that Glenlyon urged him to stay to dinner with them, since Fra Antonio was away, and, in order to overcome his fear of intruding on the hospitality of the castle, added that he would like to have some conversation with him after dinner.

Father Segneri consented, and Gian was sent to the convent of Sant' Antonio to give them notice that he would not return till evening.

The beginning of dinner was scarcely so pleasant as it might have been. Aurelia was laboriously polite and very loftily cool, Aurora was subdued and had faint traces of tears about her eyes, and Glenlyon so anxious that the meeting should be harmonious that his anxiety showed and added to the stiffness. He had no small talk, or gayety, or easy pretences, and his strength, though not devoid of tenderness, had but little of grace. But Robert, unconscious of any jar, was full of a frank gayety, and Father Segneri, apparently as unconscious, made himself charming. And so, little by little, they got themselves into tune, and when they rose from the table were in sufficiently good humor.

The priest found himself interested in this family, so simple, so well informed, and so well bred. As to Glenlyon, whose name and story had long been known to him, he was curious to hear how he would talk. Nothing could have been less simpatico to this guarded, subtile intellect than the uncalculating force of the behemoth of reform trampling on precedent and roaring at prudence. Still, he had also a certain admiration for that lavish waste of brutal strength and crude truth. He looked upon it now with a peculiar interest, for private reasons of his own.

As to the subject of the conversation which Glenlyon sought, he resignedly prepared himself for the thousand-and-first discussion of the infallibility question. The duchess had told him that the Scotchman was a Scotch Catholic and not a Roman Catholic, but had been unable to specify any particular heresy. He had a general air of keeping the ten commandments which impressed her as suspicious.

The young people soon excused themselves. Aurelia, resolving to make her confession at once, went back with Robert to the dining-room. But first she put her arms again around Aurora, and again begged her forgiveness for having wounded her.

"And I would not let you go off alone, dear," she said, "but you know that I must tell Robert all that dreadful story. I will come to your room afterward."

Aurora answered affectionately; but she did not retire to her chamber afterward. When the dining-room door had closed on her friend, she slipped down-stairs. Mariù stood alone at the door, looking out into the dark court, and wiping her eyes. Jenny, Gian, and Giovanna were eating their supper in the bright kitchen, and talking all together, —Jenny in the most remarkable Italian, which the other two assured her was almost as perfect as their own. Indeed, since the grammatical construction of her sentences, they said, was much superior to theirs,

she being a person molto istruita, their greater facility in talking would make them only about— And Gian held out his spread right hand, and, with a judicial balancing motion in which the fourth finger seemed to be weighing itself against the thumb, indicated that, on the whole, Jenny spoke Italian as well as themselves.

"Io piaqui che lei gli pensate," said Jenny complacently; to which the others, who never dreamed of understanding what she meant, responded with a simultaneous emphatic "Giù!"

Aurora touched Mariù's arm.

- "Poverina," she whispered pityingly, "don't stay here alone. Go in and let them cheer you up. Have you heard anything more?"
- "No, signorina," Mariù replied, wiping her eyes again. "But what of that? I can hear no good."
- "Mariù," Gian called out, "come in quickly, or I shall finish all these ignocchi. Certi ignocchi—" he repeated, and stopped with one in his mouth.

"I'll come," Mariù said aloud; then answered softly to a whispered question from Aurora, "No, signorina, there's nobody at all about."

Aurora crossed the dim court, and crept carefully down the dark steps to the garden, descending from one terrace to the other. Her heart had been wounded sorely in its friendship and in its patriotism. Aurelia, with all the confident pride of an Englishwoman in England, had forgotten that for an Italian that past was all too near in which their greatest valor had but left them

A servir sempre, o vincitrice o vinta,

to bear such a reproach as hers had been. And, moreover, her simple domestic virtues did not allow her fully to appreciate the loftier nature of the Italian girl, in which art and patriotism were passions, and heroism a constant possibility.

Sighing tremulously, lifting her eyebrows that the tears, which now and then would gather, might not overflow, and biting her lip when it trembled for a moment, Aurora walked about the terraced gardens in the cool starlight, touching the plants as she passed them, and recognizing them with her sensitive finger-tips, feeling the soft, full roses that looked black in those shadows, finding the lemons by their perfume, and gathering a few, while the large glossy leaves let slip now

and then a gathered dew-drop on her hair or hands. Everything was soft, and cool, and silent. She laid her forehead against the damp foliage, and caressed the flowers, and they comforted her grieved heart.

They were all Italians, and had loved no other soil.

CHAPTER XXII.

EPPUR SI MUOVE.

WHEN the two gentlemen were alone, they sat for a while without uttering a word. A fire had been kindled of a great tree-root, into which a flame was slowly gnawing. Father Segneri, looking askance at this horror of a Southern Italian, an open fire, had seated himself by the centre-table as behind a rampart, and Glenlyon had drawn his arm-chair across the corner of the fireplace, still further shielding his visitor from the flame.

"It occurred to me after I had expressed a wish to talk with you," he began, "that what I wish to say may well be unpleasant to you. I should be sorry to offend you."

"I am never offended by a good intention," the priest replied, drawing himself together, and taking out his snuff-box. "Speak freely." Then, seeing his companion still hesitate, he added, "I imagined that the question was a religious one. Perhaps the Infallibility——"

"Oh, dear, no!" Glenlyon interrupted, with vivacity. In all the difficulties which can assail the human soul in this life, it seems to me that the least we can ask of God is an assurance that the Head of the Church will never be permitted to propose a falsehood to us as an article of faith. I always saw in that dogma not a new dignity for the Pope, but a new right for the people. I saw, moreover, another good in it; for if the Pope does not need a council he does not need Rome."

Father Segneri took snuff.

"Well, he lost Rome," Glenlyon added. Then, after a momentary pause, he exclaimed, "They lost more than Rome! They lost the

opportunity of proving to the world that they believe in that Christianity of which they have so long been the visible custodians, and of thrilling the hearts of Christians the world over by a spectacle of sublime, heroic, apostolic virtue. Human nature is imperfect, and may easily transgress when tempted by worldly prosperity, but if it has faith it repents when adversity comes. Many excellent clergymen said privately, 'We deserve this for our sins!' If papal Rome had said it publicly, and put on penance, and bowed humbly to the manifest will of God, it would have produced a spiritual revival such as has not been seen since the days of the apostles."

The priest sighed, but said nothing.

"Instead of that," Glenlyon resumed, "what do we see? A party of disappointed politicians, who employ against their opponents as objectionable means as any political party ever used. They misrepresent everything, they slander, they oppose and impede, and if they could use force they would use it without scruple. They try to make the world believe that all who oppose them are atheists and heretics. It is false. They raise everywhere the cry of persecution, and that, too, is false. They are not persecuted.

"I will not say that the government did right in taking Church property, but neither am I ready to cry out that it has committed a sacrilege in so doing. I will say this, however,—that the division of property in Italy, and especially in the Papal States, was, and is, any thing but a credit to a Christian Church. To say nothing of the many families raised from obscurity and enriched by popes and prelates belonging to them, at the expense of Church property and patronage, of course here were countless monasteries and convents everywhere, some of them very rich, built on the finest sites in every town and city, and inhabited by such an immense number of men and women that when a writer I know asked a Roman clergyman for the statistics of the suppression to publish, the clergyman refused to give them, confessing that there were too many, and he did not wish them to be published. It is therefore more than probable that the statistics given in the guide-books and other publications are false, and that the public is by no means aware what a multitude of men and women were living in these so-called religious houses. Now, Catholics do not pretend to believe that all these people had a religious vocation, that they were all living virtuous and useful lives, or even decent lives; and I don't know that any one pretends to believe that the majority of them were fulfilling any religious mission whatever which would give them a right to claim extraordinary respect. Yet they were privileged persons, and they claimed an extraordinary respect, and it was considered and proclaimed a pious and meritorious act to bestow money and property on them.

"Side by side with these people lived an immense class of ignorant, suffering poor, many of them housed like beasts, half starved and vicious; and we are called on to hold up our hands in admiration because at some of these convents a daily dole of food was given, sometimes nothing more than the broken bread from their table, to a few poor wretches, who by this means escaped actual starvation, but were never helped out of their abject poverty, still less assisted to make themselves independent. Instead of admiring such charity, I cry shame on them that such a class was to be found. It is simply a gigantic Lazarus eating the crumbs that fell from the table of a gigantic Dives.

"And where did the convents get their wealth? Many of the members bring but a small portion,—sometimes a sum which would not support them a year outside the walls. I have no hesitation in saying that in the past much of their wealth was ill gotten, and that much which has come to them later was ill applied. Now, for such possessions I, for one, am not going to cry'thief! when the government takes a part of them; still less am I going to help make good the loss.

"The question of riches is perhaps the most important one of modern society, and is the source of many others. The pursuit of riches, becoming a passion, becomes unscrupulous, and, being unscrupulous, leads back to barbarism,—that is, to the triumph of force over justice. But the vice is not a new one. Its only novelty consists in its having become general. The people have learned it from those above them, and they use no worse means than their masters used. If new men obtain fortunes by speculations and cheating, the old rich often obtained it by open robbery. There is no Christian or truly honorable way of obtaining wealth except by labor of some sort, or inheritance from labor; and light labor enormously paid, or great fatigue poorly remunerated, is only veiled robbery.

"No, it is useless to merely preach against the popular ambition to become rich. We must remember that if the people of old worshipped the golden calf it was Aaron, the high-priest, who made it for them.

"A nun with whom I talked not long ago had the courage to tell me that the ignorance of the people was owing to the revolution which for twenty years has so disturbed Italy. I looked at her steadily, and she never even blushed. Probably some one had told her so, and she believed it.

"'I hate education for the people,' said a Roman cardinal not long ago. 'I hate it! I hate it!' That is what keeps them ignorant; and it is their ignorance which keeps them in starvation. They have not learned to read that the laborer is worthy of his hire; nor have they learned that no one in the world would ever die of starvation if all the money given and meant for charity reached the poor who need it."

Glenlyon paused again, and again the priest sighed, but his lips remained sealed.

"I wished to mention a fact to you in which I am personally interested," Glenlyon resumed. "A friend of mine, a young man, was lately refused the sacraments by a Roman priest because, being scrupulous, he mentioned in confession that he did not believe in the temporal power. Of course he should not have spoken of it. He was in some doubt on the subject; but he certainly did not expect to be treated as though he had denied the existence of God. He was more against the temporal power after this confession than before, and declared that he could not believe in it. The result is that he is virtually excommunicated, unless this priest is a heretic. Am I to understand that you, sir, justify his claim to refuse the sacraments for such a cause?"

"I deny it," Father Segneri answered promptly.

"These things are serious," Glenlyon urged. "If they were parts of a dying system, we might have patience and let the dead past bury its dead. But they are parts of a system which will struggle to preserve itself as long as it can cling to the immortal life of the Church for sustenance, and, baffled in one place, will seek to establish itself in another. It has worn out opposition by stubbornness before this, and thinks to do it again; and perhaps never before did so much depend upon the result. Along with the two phases of unbelief of the present

time, indifferentism and reckless, suicidal despair and denial of everything supernatural, there is waking up another spirit outside of Catholicism,—a spirit which is either the perfect moral result of a fine intellect and a good heart or a direct inspiration given by God. This spirit perceives the horror of infidelity, the necessity of faith and of an authoritative guide. If the Church were purified from abuses and restored to an assured and perfect Christianity, it would answer every need of these searching, troubled souls. What if they cannot accept it as it is? What if, accepting it because they can find nothing better, they afterward rebel? Whose will be the fault? What if, looking at the attempts made to keep Italian Catholics out of Italian politics, they say, 'It is true that the Church does destroy patriotism'?

"The forced abstinence from voting and taking of office looks bad. A high official told me not long ago that, though the clerical party will not come out honestly and take a manly part in politics, they have a spy in every office from the Alps to Sicily. It is degrading to every one concerned.

"One of your noblest Italians, Massimo d'Azeglio, wrote of the Rome of thirty or forty years ago, 'I lived in a society where every sense of the true, the generous, the elevated, was extinguished.' What had extinguished it? In a popular government the people give the tone, and the executive is but the voice of the popular conscience. But an ecclesiastical government impresses its own character on those whom it rules. If its character is in opposition to the religion which it teaches, or professes to teach, it is still that character, and not the religion, which makes itself felt. To quote Massimo d'Azeglio again, 'The spectacle of Papal Rome has destroyed religion in Italy.'

"Yet there was nowhere any finer material than the Italian character presented for the formation of an ideal Christian nation; and there are nowhere nobler and better men than many of those who are now devoting themselves to the building up of Italy."

There was a short silence. The priest sat looking straight before him. In his pale face could be read the meaning of that pathetic phrase he afterward used, "La stanca mia vita."

Presently he lifted himself from his listening attitude. "If your difficulty had been one of faith," he said, "I could have helped you; but I can give you no reassurance on the subject which disturbs your

mind. When you shall have heard my story, you will feel that I cannot help you."

He hesitated, and seemed to experience something of the difficulty which Glenlyon had found in beginning. Then he went on:

"I have long seen that the popular movement so universal in the world was not a passing disturbance, as many thought, which would soon give place to the old order; and I did not, like many about me, look upon the movement as one of unmixed evil. It cannot be said that there is anything in evangelical teaching against popular governments,—if, indeed, the two are not in peculiar harmony. Christ and his apostles were of the people, and he went about among the people, keeping aloof from the great. He showed himself in the court of a king only to be derided, and he entered the presence of a Roman governor only to be condemned. Nor is there found in the gospel any necessity that the Church should act directly on human societies. The saving action of the redemption looked to individuals, to regenerate them spiritually in virtue of a faith which would be to them the root of good actions and make them heirs of eternal life. These individual conversions, multiplying, would naturally act on human societies, and so, according to the Scripture figure, gradually leaven the whole mass.

"The Revolution in France had for its first aim to put an end to the reign of Louis XIV., which was an unchristian, even Oriental, government; and it was not a bad aim. If it afterward destroyed an innocent man, it must be remembered that there had intervened the long infamy of the Regency and Louis XV. It sacrificed priests, too; but they were not sacrificed as Christians, but as rich and powerful men whose sympathies were with the rich and powerful.

"I believe that if, when this movement first began, God had sent us one of those great men whom he reserves for the day of his mercy,—a man who would have known how to recognize the good of the revolutionary idea and avoid the evil,—the popular governments might have been made Christian, as the monarchies which rose out of feudalism were Christian. The wise reforms made in the Council of Trent sufficed for three centuries of peace. If they had been made a hundred years sooner, the schism of Luther might have been avoided.

"God did not will that any reforms should be made in the Vatican council.

"Pio Nono once spoke to me very frankly about the men who were at the head of affairs in Rome, and, naming one after another, commented on their unfitness for the positions they held. I ventured to say, 'Then why, Holy Father, do you not remove them and put better men in their places?' He replied, 'It is true that they are unfit; but nevertheless the bark goes!' We see where it has gone!

"Instead of hearing the reason of the people, Rome set itself in firm antagonism. But the people have now become intelligent and instructed, and they have lost much of their faith in the clergy. They seek to base their governments on a purely natural foundation, conceding to the Church as a body no more than to its single members and ministers as simple citizens.

"Many believe that such a state of society cannot continue to exist for any length of time, but must give place to what they choose to consider the normal state of things. Yet such societies flourished for forty centuries before Christ. It will be said, then, that we return to paganism; nor do I deny it, for the essence of paganism was not constituted from idolatry, which was rather a consequence of it, but consisted entirely in having nothing but nature for foundation.

"I say that the clergy have to a great extent lost the public confidence. Worse than that, the Christian conscience, without which there is no Christianity, is weakened, and almost destroyed, not only in the people, but in the clergy themselves. There remains enough only to save the promise of Christ. By Christian conscience I mean a sincere belief in the primary doctrines of Christ,—the fall of man from original justice, the redemption, the taking this life merely as a battleground whereon the happiness of a future life is to be lost or won, the belief that riches are to be feared rather than desired and that poverty is the safer possession, that saving faith is that faith which produces good works, and that every pre-eminence, sacred and profane, should be sought and held solely as a means of doing good to others. While this belief existed, though the works might correspond but feebly, there was still a point for the lever of reform. But how often do we hear these primal truths insisted upon, and how often are they acted on? Who is afraid of being rich and powerful? And who, even in the Church, seeks or accepts high office only to serve? Serve was the word, and at first the deed corresponded; but, though the

word is preserved, and sometimes used with a courage worthy of a better cause, it has become a bitter irony. What with sophisms, softenings, and explanations, there remains but a shadow of Christianity. There are many zealous and practical Catholics who believe that it is enough if they commit no grave fault to obtain any earthly good.

"That we might know this,-

Mestier non era partorir Maria.

Epictetus, Seneca, Plutarch, and other pagan philosophers could have told us as much.

- "It will be said that Christian doctrines were softened in order to make them more acceptable to the people; but it must be owned that the expedient is a failure.
 - "What, then, was to be done?
- "Machiavelli said—but Aristotle said it before him—that falling or fallen institutions can be again raised only through the same means by which they were at first built up. This means, given by Christ himself to his apostles, was the preaching of the Word.
- "I said as long ago as 1869 the only way to save this generation is to return to Christ. You see what we have come to, and not all by the fault of the revolution.
- "But no one listened to me. All were occupied in putting down the revolution and saving the temporal power. They said, and perhaps they believed, that once order, as they conceived it, were restored, all other things would follow. It was reversing the dictum of Christ: Seek first the kingdom of God.
- "Left alone, then, I did what I could. Christ did not command that a book should be written; but since we have this sovereign monument of Divine mercy, a true story of His life who is the life of the Church, with the Acts of the Apostles, and their explanations of his doctrine, it is clear that this book should be the chief study of the clergy, and should be known by the people.
- "In 1873 I published an Italian version of the four Evangelists, with brief notes, and either sold or gave away, chiefly in Tuscany, thirty thousand copies.
- "Having reason to be encouraged by the result of this first step, I preached, and published in Florence, from 1874 to 1876, a large Com-

mentary on the Evangelists, one hundred and ten Lessons, and a Concordance, with moral applications.

"I was still further encouraged by having a cultivated audience, chiefly of men, and by seeing some fruits of my work. But it was to me a miserable sign that not the least encouragement was given me by the clergy. The five volumes were scarcely noticed. As to the rest, it was a wonder that I was even allowed to preach. I did not lack open disrespect, intimations that I did not sing the same tune as the others, grumblings that my preaching was an innovation (an innovation to explain the Gospels in a Christian Church!), and accusations of a tendency toward Protestantism; assertions, too, that the Church forbade the people the use of the Bible.

"Here is what the assertion was based upon, and it has no other support: In reply to the claim of private interpretation in the sixteenth century, there is a rule of the Index which forbids the publishing of a part or the whole of the Scriptures without ecclesiastical approbation and explanatory notes. It was a wise restriction, meant to maintain the integrity of the sacred text and prevent ignorant or malicious perversions of meaning in obscure passages; and the very fact of regulating the reading of the Scriptures is an implied permission to read them. Yet the zealots, exaggerating, and even falsifying, this just and temperate regulation, assert that it is not advisable—that it is even prohibited—to read the Scriptures, that being a custom of heretics and excommunicated.

"From this results that the people know nothing of that Christ in whom they say that they believe. Among us his life is very seldom made the subject of catechism or explanation. There is a rule that on festa days there shall be an explanation of the Gospel of the day in the parish church, and the parish priest who omits this for three festas in succession is liable to reprimand. But any one who has heard these explanations knows what pitiable things they are. The subject requires more learning and study than these men bring. The New Testament is the book least of all studied by the clergy. The most of them scarcely know more of it than what they are obliged to read in their breviary and missal. And of the laity, the most of those even who are instructed do not know that such a book exists in the world.

"While, among Protestants, what incredible studies on the Bible!

I have a list of eighty-eight treatises on St. John alone, chiefly German, published from 1864 to 1874, some of them of great value. A few have appeared among us: Ghiringello's Esame of that Parisian romance the author dared to call a Life of Christ; Arosio's Historical Studies; two Lives of Christ, one by Capecelatro, the other, a magnificent work, by Fornari; and new editions of two other excellent books. All these are good, but they are very little for three lustres in Italy; and I doubt if the publishers of any of them made a fortune. Some, I know, did not pay the expenses.

"The great festas which commemorate events in the life of Christ would have given another opportunity to make him known to the people; but we have no Bossuet, nor Bourdaloue, nor Massillon, men whose splendid sermons on those grand subjects resemble treatises; and it is not unlikely that on Christmas or Easter we may find ourselves treated to a discourse on the glories of Sant' Antonio or the wonders of some brand-new Madonna. This devotion to Mary, so holy and so noble, what does it become when separated from the knowledge of Christ, which alone can give it value? Then, as if to draw men's minds still more away from Christ, we have new devotions and practices constantly coming in, like new fashions in bonnets and dresses.

"The triumph of the Church, as these men wish and seek it, would have the infallible effect of making the clergy the richest, most respected, and most powerful class in the world. Setting aside the doctrine of Christ on the question, the history of the world will show us what this leads to. In that period which immediately followed the end of the Middle Ages, the violent and immoral clergy of Italy, the immoral and drunken clergy of Germany, ready to throw off every restraint, the over-rich prelates of England, who bowed to Henry VIII., and the aulic clergy of France, of whom forty bishops openly followed the Revolution when first it broke out, are examples. It is true that the clergy of France, England, and Germany redeemed themselves afterward, and gave noble proofs of strength and faithfulness; but it was only after they had been tempered in the fire of tribulation to the holy and virile austerity of the gospel.

"Seeing all this, it seemed to me that it was the will of God that the Church should enter on a period of retirement and self-examination. I thought that all Christian Italians should take a part in the Evernment of their country and try to infuse as much of Christianity into its laws as possible. The forced compliments we received did not impose on me. The real coldness of the world was perceptible through its apparent sympathy. There is dignity in misfortune worthily borne; but we were becoming not only odious, but ridiculous. I urged all these things, and urged them earnestly.

"It is useless to dwell on the opposition I met with. Suffice it that the General of our Company commanded me to give a written retraction of the opinions I had advanced, or leave the Society. Believing that my first duty in the circumstances was to God and my own conscionce, I refused to recant; and I have been turned out of the order."

A sudden "Oh!" burst from Glenlyon's lips. He had been listening breathlessly to the last words, and, as the priest ended, he leaned forward and kissed the hand that, trembling like a leaf, hung on the edge of the table.

"I have been forbidden to teach, to preach, or to hear confessions," Father Segneri went on. "Nothing is left me but the mass. At the age of seventy I am turned out upon the world to earn my own living by my pen, with a host against me. There were those who secretly agreed with me; but when called to the Vatican and questioned, they weakly denied. If all who thought as I do had stood by me, we might have been listened to; but it is easy to crush one man."

He stopped a moment; then, his calmness failing, he wrung his hands: "I was a preacher, sought for and honored, and it was my happiness to believe that I could do some good by preaching. I have studied the human mind and conscience for forty years, and laid up much experience, and learned something of the art of consoling, enlightening, and strengthening penitent souls. They have struck me dumb. I had given up all family ties to live in a community, and had lost all sympathy with any other sort of life for myself. They have turned me out. Father Luigi Tosti says that, to a monk, his monastery is his country. Mine was not my country; but it was my home."

"My home is yours as long as you will do me the favor to accept it," Glenlyon said. "In whatever I can do for you, command me!"

The priest thanked him warmly. "But I cannot accept your hospitality," he said. "I must live as much like a religious as my circumstances will allow, and it is better that I should live in my native

city, where I am known. There, at least, they will not be so likely to believe calumnies of me. For I shall not be left in peace. All that I say and do will be misrepresented, and they will say that I am not orthodox when they find any one ignorant enough to believe them. They will deny me talent, even; they will discover faults in my past, where they had never suspected them before; they will try to impede the sale of my books, and of my translation of the New Testament, which I see that you have here. These"-passing a trembling hand over his white hair-"should, I think, secure me from some outrages which a younger man would not escape. 'The poison of asps is under their tongues.' And all this"-his lip curled-" not without the intervention of the pious sex. Those who wish to treat the Pope as a puppet will cry out with pretended horror because I speak of him as I should not be surprised," he said, looking at Glenlyon with a faint smile, "if an effort were made to abuse your mind in my regard before I leave this place."

"It would not succeed, sir!" Glenlyon exclaimed. "I am not the stuff of which dupes are easily made."

"I shall write my defence," Father Segneri resumed, and sighed.
"I will not leave my name to be covered with calumnies, as so many others have been. God grant that they may not put my book in the Index!"

"And if they do?" asked Glenlyon.

The priest compressed his lips with an expression of invincible resolution. "I shall submit!" he said. "If I did not, they would accuse me of hercsy. I shall submit, as Galileo did. He was condemned by the Pope, and by the Congregations of the Index and the Rota. In fact, the two cases are very much the same, the one being the physical, the other the moral, form. In the past they denied that the earth moves; in the present they declare that humanity is stationary: Eppur si muove!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

COMING DOWN.

WHILE Father Segneri and Glenlyon talked together in the drawing-room, and Aurora consoled her sad heart with the flowering Italians in the garden and cooled her tear-flushed eyes with Italian dews, Aurelia told the whole story of her sentimental episode with Don Leopoldo to her Scottish lover.

It hurt him to the quick. He respected her for her frankness, he could find excuses for her imprudence; but the charm of his first happiness was gone. He was not so material as to think a woman spoiled because the breath of love had come so near her,—Aurelia was something higher than a pretty animal to his mind,—but he could no more think that during their separation she had been thinking of him and gradually melting to him. In her earnestness to convince him that there had been no element of real love in what she had felt for Don Leopoldo, she had dwelt only too eloquently on the magic of that moonlight scene, and the intoxication of that life into which no dull realities had obtruded themselves. The result had been other than she intended; for to Robert it seemed that he was but the humdrum husband whom her prudence had chosen, while the Italian was the fairy prince of those Cinderella festas of the imagination where he had no place.

- "Remember, Robert, that at least I have not attempted to deceive you," she said, watching his smileless face, on which a shadow lingered after all her protestations.
- "It would have been unworthy of you to conceal this, Aurelia," he replied gravely. "I should have expected you to tell me, if I had known that there was anything to tell."
- "If you had already known it, you would not have renewed your offer!" she exclaimed.
- "Probably not," he said calmly. "I should have waited for an explanation."
 - "Then you are free!" she cried out, rising. "You no longer love

me. A man's love is half vanity. He will overlook nothing, while we must forgive everything. Let all be as if you had not spoken." And then she burst out crying.

He followed her to the door, where she had paused to wipe her eyes, and took her hand in his. "I am not free, for I love you as well as ever," he said seriously. "But you must forgive me if, for a while at least, I cannot be quite so happy as I was."

A message from Glenlyon interrupted them. His visitor had gone, and Aurora was with him. She had met Father Segneri on the stair in coming up, and had knelt to receive his blessing. They all remained for half an hour together talking, each one too grave to notice the gravity of the others.

When they were about to separate for the night, Glenlyon asked Aurelia to remain with him.

"My dear," he said, when they were alone, "I have to speak to you of a wish which has sprung up in my mind to-day. I wish that you and Robert would marry without delay, in a month if possible. Be quiet, dear, and listen; then you can answer. I had not thought of the marriage taking place before spring; but many things have come to my mind in favor of an earlier day. My life is uncertain, for one reason. If we were in England, that would not matter 80 much, because I should leave you with my sisters. would be left among strangers, and be obliged either to return to England and give Robert the trouble and expense of going after you, or to marry here in sorrow. I want to see you married in joy, and to be able to see you happy in your married life. I shall not be left alone. Aurora will be here, and perhaps her mother. Besides, you know, I have little need of company. There is another reason yet. Do you not feel that this interrogation concerning Don Leopoldo's whereabouts is a good reason for your showing them all in the most unmistakable way that you do not care for him? What do you think of it?"

"But Robert might not wish it," she said, all confused. "How could it be proposed to him to hasten?"

"Trust me not to offer you to an unwilling spouse," Glenlyon replied. "You cannot believe that I shall let him think that you hasten him! I only tell you my wishes, and the reasons for them. I will leave him to persuade you. I will even tell him that you object."

"And then he will believe that I do not love him, and will refuse to ask me," Aurelia exclaimed, and burst into tears.

Her guardian was astonished. "Why! what is the matter?" he sasked.

"I have been telling him all that affair of Don Leopoldo, and what a fool I was that night," she sobbed; "and he is all changed. He says that he forgives me, and loves me just the same; but he is changed."

"You told him!" repeated Glenlyon, and for a moment looked disconcerted.

"Certainly I told him!" she returned almost angrily. "Do you think that I would conceal anything from my promised husband? Do you think that, when he asked me if I had ever thought for an instant that I loved any one else, I would tell him a lie? Do you think that, when he asked me if—if I had—oh, dear!—if I had ever kissed any one else, I would say no? I hate myself, but of course I told him!"

Glenlyon had never before seen his ward in an impassioned mood, and it made him smile. For a moment it made him forget the "horror of great darkness" which had fallen upon him when Father Segneri had left him alone.

"That's my true girl!" he said, patting her on the shoulder. "I wish that Robert could see you now. He would be consoled for that little folly."

His laugh comforted her. It seemed to promise that all would be arranged; and when he bade her go away and think no more of the matter, she wiped her eyes and went with something of her wonted calm.

Of course she went and told the whole story to Aurora. "Words cannot tell how dear Robert is to me," she said, after a long discussion of the matter. "I did not know before."

And it was true. The fear of losing him, or his esteem, the sight of a cloud on that face which had always worn a smile for her, the having had to sue to him whom she had before commanded,—all had raised him to a pinnacle in her mind. Her gentle, tolerating love of the past had become an anxious and even impassioned affection. She was willing to do anything if only she could see again the old look of adoring tenderness. The remembrance of that face grown suddenly

grave and pale, of the eyes looking down, and the lips closed for long seconds which had seemed hours while she begged him to speak, the manner from which all the life had gone,—they weighed upon her heart with a dull pain. How well he looked when he was proud! But, oh! that he should be proud toward her!

"How could he care about such a capricious, fickle, immodest girl?" she cried. "I should not blame him if he were to go away to-morrow morning and make me wait for him years and years!"

And then she recollected with a secret joy that Glenlyon would not let him go.

They both of them passed a tolerably miserable night. Robert had not the resolution to tell himself to go to sleep. He wanted to consider what he should think of it all, and he wanted to torment his own heart, in true lover's fashion, by imagining to himself everything which had occurred. And the longer he considered, the more commonplace he became in his own eyes. He could not play the mandolin, nor would he ever have dreamed of climbing to the top of a tree under a lady's balcony, unless the house had been on fire. It occurred to him that if the house had been on fire perhaps this moonshiny lover would not have been so ready for the feat.

And so in the morning two pale faces confronted each other at the breakfast-table, and Glenlyon and Aurora had the talk very much to themselves.

But when, on leaving the table, Glenlyon asked Robert to remain in the dining-room with him a few minutes, Aurelia ran to hang on her guardian's arm. "Don't ask him!" she whispered vehemently. "I won't be offered to any one. I will marry Don Leopoldo first!"

Her guardian pinched her cheek. "Go down and get me some lemons," he said. "And see if some of the mandarini are not ripe."

She was glad to get out of the house, and with Aurora went, basket in hand, down the terraces, searching out the finest lemons in that garden of the Hesperides, and feeling for those mandarini which should, like the King Charles spaniels, seem to be too small for their skins. She went to the lowest terrace, and wished that there were a lower. She had half a mind to rush back to the house and dress, and go out for the longest walk ever taken by a reasonable young woman. Aurora's consolations and assurances were all flung aside; yet when

she ceased to utter them her friend reproached her with a want of sympathy. "Tell me the truth!" she cried. "Am I not despicable? I am disgraced forever, and there is one man coaxing another man to marry me! And the other——"

"The other" was coming down the terraces, hat in hand, in the soft sunshine, and he was whistling a certain tune which made her heart beat quicker yet and lose a little of its load.

She glanced up at the windows, and saw Glenlyon looking at her. He waved his hand, and nodded his head. It occurred to her that they might both of them have been looking down, and that she had been gesticulating, and wiping her eyes, while Aurora caressed and consoled her. It struck her, too, as she glanced furtively up at the young man who came whistling, and pausing in the most cold-blooded way, descending quite at his leisure, that he had a certain mocking expression in his face which showed that he despised her from the bottom of his heart.

"You sing?" Aurora said to him when he came nearer. "We must all sing together some time. Why should we not sing here? This garden is lovely for music. Those rocks take the sound and toss at out like a ball."

Aurelia was quite pale. Robert had not once glanced at her. He seemed to be looking at Aurora with admiration.

"Tosses it out like a ball?" he repeated. "Let me hear." And, raising his pleasant voice, he sang the song he had been whistling,—

- "O how my heart is beating as her name I keep repeating,
 And I drink up joy like wine;
 O how my heart is beating as her name I keep repeating.
 - O how my heart is beating as her name I keep repeating, For the lovely girl is mine!"

And when he stopped, and there was not a sound or movement for so long a time that Aurelia was obliged to look up and see what it meant, Aurora had disappeared, and Robert stood there with both hands held out to her, and his face overflowing with tender joyfulness. She went to him and stood humbly by his side, her eyes downcast to hide the tears in them.

"If only you could make up your mind to consent, dear!" he said.
"I should be so happy! I can get everything ready. I have already

a house taken. I will rush to Rome to-morrow night and engage a temporary place for us, and we will furnish our house together. That is the way the birds do. We must have a room for my uncle which he can occupy whenever he comes."

He went on rapidly, as though all were settled; and after a while Aurelia forgot that it was not settled properly, and joined with him in domestic discussions and artistic plans, and had promised to send at once to London for a box of books and bric-à-brac, when she recollected her dignity.

"But who says that we are to be married in a month?" she asked. "It is impossible!"

He only looked at her. But it seemed as if his eager, joyous face were taking on that terrible cloud again.

- "I will marry you whenever you say!" she exclaimed. "Only don't look like that!"
 - "Willingly, Aurelia?"
 - "Gladly, Robert!"
- "But there is the luncheon-bell ringing," she said presently; "and we have been staying here the longest time!"
- "How glad I am that it wasn't he who first noticed the luncheoubell!" she thought, as she went to her room to smooth her hair. "And how glad I am that I wasn't so silly as to own that I didn't dream it was so late! I've come down quite enough for one twentyfour hours."
- "Though, to be sure," she added presently, with a sweet smile at her pretty reflection in the glass, "Robert is worthy that a queen should come down to him!"

And then she considered a little longer; and then she said, "Not that it is coming down for any woman on earth to marry such a man as he is!" And, lifting her head very haughtily at some invisible impertinent, she went out to luncheon, and sat down proudly by her lover's side.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"ONE MAN HAVE I FOUND AMONG A THOUSAND."

NE of the most delightful of occupations for a woman is to prepare plan for her first housekeeping, when she is not so rich as to be ;ed to delegate those labors to others. Aurelia had a modest comnce, and was wise enough to be content with it. It did not lessen pleasure to think that she must begin with an imperfect establisht and improve it little by little. The quiet good sense of a well-need, though limited, nature reminded her that "enough is as good feast," if she had not that wisdom of a larger soul which knows they have not enough who lack a sweet wish unfulfilled.

hey talked over their plans quite freely before Aurora. She had a to leave the room when the topic was first introduced; but Glenicalled her back again. "Have you any secrets from her?" he ed of the other two.

No, indeed!" said Robert cordially.

Certainly not!" Aurelia added, and made room for her where she on the sofa with her lover.

You are so good!" she murmured, and felt that she could never loving enough or faithful enough to fitly reward their generous idence.

eater, the three young people went out, leaving Glenlyon, at his rest, to take his afternoon exercise alone in the loggia.

'he superior of a convent where Aurelia was having a piece of fine repaired had sent a note requesting Aurora to come to her, if pos, that afternoon, as she did not quite understand what was to be e with the work.

I do not know what there could be to understand," Aurora said; it I will go. You will want your laces sooner than you thought, elia."

lobert and Aurelia accompanied her to the convent door, and left there, and Gian was to come for her in half an hour.

'his convent was an immense pile on a slight elevation at the south-

eastern part of the town, its large gardens, full of fruit, vegetables and flowers, falling down around it to the plain. From the lofty windows could be seen the landscape far and wide, with the convent vique and grain-fields. Twenty or thirty young girls went to school here, and now and then some lady came recommended to them as a guest, or some friend made her villeggiatura with them instead of going to a public house. Plenty and ease reigned in the place. Poor, and even well-to-do, families thought a daughter fortunate if, with a small portion, she could be willing to make herself a nun and secure a life of ease and dignity in this establishment. There were lay-sisters to do the most of the work; and the teaching, which was of the most superficial and worthless kind, would not have taxed the brain of a child. Perhaps the most arduous labor performed was that of making a needlework imitation of a steel engraving with fine black sewing-silk on a white silk ground. The girls were taught something of deportment and a great number of little exterior "devotions,"-" praticuce," a famous priest has slightingly called them, to the wrath of the teachers, seeing how likely they are to materialize religion, and satisfy the conscience in place of real virtue, making an end of that which should be merely a means.

But, above all, these girls were guarded from any possible love-affair; and to this end they were closely watched. Writing-materials were jealously overlooked, and boxes and pockets searched with a view to finding possible love letters; and if a girl should stand in a window a moment, a pair of eyes were instantly set at some hidden peep-hole to discover if there were a young man beneath, or beyond, or to right or left. Thanks to this system, of which the girls were all more or less aware, the thought of lovers was kept very vividly before their minds, associated, too, with the slyest modes of communicating with them; and, their education finished, they went to their homes with very clear ideas on the subject of intrigue, and a good many new lights on the ways and means of evading discovery or of playing the spy.

It was this system which had provoked in Aurora herself, when she was at school, those ebullitions of fury which the nuns had complained of and had expressed themselves astonished at finding side by side with moods of almost saintly elevation. The one made them wish

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sometimes that she should join their community; the other quite frightened such a wish out of their minds. For, indeed, had she become a nun she must have been ruined and wretched, or have become One of those whitely-glowing saints that scantily and singly in the centuries have sprung out of these Italian convents, like tall and solitary lilies rising from a bank of ignoble weeds or from the unclean mire. What right had they to read her mother's notes? she asked. What did they want to find in the bottom of her boxes? What did they think to see or hear when they hid behind the vines and listened to her simple talk with a school-fellow? And when she stood before window wrapped in the contemplation of a sunset or a sunrise, or Sazing at flocks of birds gathering at twilight to blacken all the top of a near campanile, till, the last wanderer arrived, some winged general gave the signal, and they all swept in a rustling cloud across the sky to fold their wings in sleep beneath the ilex-branches of a villa,hat did it mean, when she leaned forward with a smile to watch that seet heavenly society, where crows and doves and all the dear downy Christians of the air flew side by side, that a veiled head suddenly Protruded from some one of the many screened loop-holes, and, with es full of the sharp eagerness of a low suspicion, scanned all the Pace about?

"If you are doing no harm, then you need not mind being watched,"
the duchess had said to her once, when there had been a grand fracas
and Aurora had declared that she would leave the convent. People
whose minds are accustomed to a vitiated moral air always do wonder
at those who cannot bear it.

"Being observed, when observation is not sympathy, is just being tortured," says Mrs. Browning; and any one not mean can understand in some degree that fine, proud sensitiveness.

Suor Benedetta received Aurora with open arms. She was a rather pleasant-faced woman of middle age, and had all the cordial grace of her country. She asked about the family, and, by a few well-directed questions, learned everything that was going on in the castle, except the time appointed for Aurelia's marriage, and Father Segneri's errand to Glenlyon. These two items Aurora reserved: the rest she thought best to tell.

But Suor Benedetta knew as much of Father Segneri's errand as

Aurora did, the duchess having written to her, and more of Father Segneri himself than the duchess knew when she made him her ambassador. In fact, she had sent for Aurora in order to speak of him:

"What! has he been here? and at the castle?" she exclaimed, with an air of surprise. "What did he say? How did he act?" "Say? Act?" repeated Aurora. "Why, as usual."

The nun shook her head and looked piteously upward. "Poor, deluded man!" she sighed. "I pray that Almighty God may have mercy on him, and show him the error of his ways; though there is little chance for reform when a person of that age goes astray. It is to be feared that he never was quite what we thought. And now, Signorina Aurora, I must ask a great favor of you. Join with us in a novena which we are going to begin to-night for his conversion. You can say the prayers at home: an Our Father, a Hail Mary, and a Glory be to the Father."

Aurora had grown very pale. "What does it mean?" she asked faintly. "What has he done?"

"He has made a terrible scandal, signorina," the nun replied. "He has disobeyed his superiors in such a manner that they have been obliged to turn him out of the order. The Holy Father is so grieved about it that he will not see him. It is a terrible scandal,—and now of all times, when the enemies of the Holy Church are doing all the eyean against it! Oh, my dear contessina, how careful we should be ourselves when we see how even an old man who was held to be a list in the Church can fall so into the power of the enemy!"

"How could he?" Aurora exclaimed, distressed and confused by this vague accusation. "It seems impossible. He was most kind me, and he looked good. I met him on the stair when he went awalast night, and I knelt and asked his blessing. His hand tremb when he laid it on my head. I felt that he was moved. Perhaps was repenting of what he had done."

The nun shook her head: "I am afraid not. They say that—shows a most disobedient spirit. Still, he must have been unhap—No one can be happy when doing wrong. No one can have any pe—who goes against the Church in such a way. But you should not have lissed his hand, nor asked his blessing. To be sure, you did not kn •

Try to keep out of his way if he goes to the castle again. If you can't help meeting him, be civil, of course,—we must always be charitable,—but don't ask his blessing. And you had better let the Signor Glenlyon know that he has been degraded. And tell the servand that it would not be becoming to kiss his hand. They can keep back a little when he passes."

"Oh, poor Father Segneri!" Aurora exclaimed. "I feel as if I could fall on my knees to him and beg him to return! His hand trembled so! Do you think that they were very kind and patient with him, Suora mia? Do you feel sure that they understood him? Do you know, there is something in a thin, pale hand—when it trembles so, too !--that makes my heart ache?"

The nun looked somewhat scandalized, and a little stiff. "It is to be supposed that the authorities in Rome know how to do their duty," she said.

Aurora sighed. "How bad mamma will feel!" she said tearfully.

The nun made no reply. Among her clique it was suspected that the Coronari was tainted with liberalism and given to forming her own opinions rather too boldly. Had she not once taken a very disagreeable tone with Suor Benedetta herself, when the nun had set certain dishonest Catholics higher in the scale of being than certain honest non-Catholics they spoke of, and advanced that dexterous argument which treats contemptuously the "vulgar integrity" of an unbelieving person as compared with the ineffectual faith of a sinner?

"The devils believe, and tremble," the countess had said. "They are the worse for that very belief. On the other hand, God always chose the upright man for favors. There is no acceptable Christian charity which is not founded on Jewish righteousness. Our Lord did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil."

To be sure, one never knows what a poetess may mean, if she mean anything; but the suora had found this a very disagreeable speech.

But she had nothing, as yet, against Aurora, and, seeing her deeply troubled, took her down for diversion into the garden, where to a sunny arbor, ringed about with mandarin orange-trees in boxes, she had sent a tray with a little bottle of sweet wine and some cakes. She strove to cheer her guest, whose eyes filled with tears again and again and whose face had not regained its color. She examined the mandarini trees to

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see if any of the fruit were ripe; she pressed the little treat upon her; she gathered her a great handful of roses, red, pink, and white, that bloomed profusely in the warm sun, shielded from November chills. She did all that the most cordial hospitality could do. But she sent the girl away with a pain in her heart, to do a wicked errand. The Suor Benedetta knew that Father Segneri had not uttered a heresy, that his life had been blameless and devoted, and that he was, humanly speaking, ruined,—since all the interests of his soul had been in Italy and in the life of a religious, and he was too old to change. She knew, too, that he was sincere. Yet she could set thorns in his path when he came her way, to draw a few more drops of blood from his already bleeding heart; she could poison the few pleasant minutes he. might have passed with persons who, she supposed, knew nothing of his story; and she could teach even servants to despise him. Verily, a "vulgar integrity" would be a safer neighbor and a more trustworthy friend than such a supernatural zeal and charity!

Aurora went directly to Glenlyon and told him all. She had more confidence in him than in the suora, though she had not doubted honesty. Who knows? she thought. Perhaps he may see some wout of the difficulty. Perhaps even he may talk with Father Segnon the subject.

She did not understand the exclamation he uttered when he knewler errand, for it was in English. "What!' he said, "are the blook hounds already on his track?"

When she was done speaking, and stood there before him with homeonia inhands clasped, her eyes imploring help, he considered for a few minutes.

"Aurora," he said then, "do just as I bid you. Go to Fra Antonio, Father Segneri's friend, and tell him what you have said to me If he is not at home, don't go to any other priest in town. Lose not time. I will wait for you here."

Ah, Fra Antonio, we bend to kiss thy shadow!

He is by birth a Roman, he is a monk, and at the head of a comnunity, and he is a Christian. What words can describe his perfect ife,—the more perfect that no one talks about it? Can you describe he circle so that it shall seem to have a soul in it? You might s= say hat all his outward acts and seeming group and turn themselves in

equal harmony around some centre that attracts and holds them. feel a quiet, steady strength in him. No mocker ever mocks him when he passes by. A momentary seriousness comes over them when they see him. "That is a good man!" they say when he is out of "He is no impostor!" A young man yet, not more than forty, and you scarcely notice that he might be called beautiful. brown robe and black hat are neither fresh nor shabby, but decent. If you could see him in the time—once in ten years, perhaps—when he has bought a new sottana, you would almost believe that if you could but touch the edge of it unknown to him a healing virtue would flow out to you. He takes the garment seriously and treats it with care. It has cost the price of many dinners for the poor; and he has bought it only after much consideration of its predecessor, which will still be Worn in private for a while, then be laid by for patches when this also shall be old; and the patches he puts on himself, and tells no one; and no one knows it save those who scarce would tell. A new gravestone would show more vanity. He does not strike you any way unless you look him full in the face and watch him unperceived a little while. Then you would learn what "recollection" means, and What it means to have "recess of soul." His lips, locked and forgotten, seem never to have smiled, yet are not stern. His eyes are guarded, yet not furtive; and in all his quiet ways there is no taint of sneaking or of oily stealthiness. He gives you a faint sense of hidden asceticism, you scarce know how, even as you scarce know where to find that knot of violets hidden by the humble grasses, but which yet send out a delicate breath to you as you pass through the forest. He makes no useless visits, and no useless talk, yet answers to the point, and not too briefly, when you speak to him. Tell him of scandals where holiness should be, and no haughty anger betrays or guilt or worldliness rising up within him to trample down the truth. "I know it but too well," he says, and drops his face, as if the fault were his, silently humiliated, and makes no comments nor excuses.

His speech is clear and honest, and his counsel sound. He seeks to form neither ascetics nor hypocrites, but honest men and women who have a hope of a heaven won by no crooked means. The poor are ever about him. He makes no show of charity with other people's money, but what his own small means can do is done. He may now

and then draw aside some merchant, and, whispering, ask for a piece of flannel on credit, or for cloth to make a straw bed. He will pay next month, he says, and next month he does pay. He is even a little ashamed, God love him! to ask credit, but must because a family or some sick one is suffering.

May holy reverence ever follow in the footsteps of such a man as this! There are a few such living yet in Italy, ashamed and silent. The world knows little of them, but we must believe that angels "love the letters of their names." May human love shine round them ever, coming not too near! And when the Tempter comes to them with his insidious "Ye shall not surely die; but ye shall be as gods," may the Archangel Michael's sword flash burning lightnings in his face!

Glenlyon, left alone, never ceased to walk the terrace, till, just as the Avemmaria bells began to ring, Aurora returned to him with a faint smile upon her face.

- " Well?" he said.
- "He says that Father Segneri is guilty of no heresy, and that the only difficulty is a difference of opinions, which need not trouble me. He says that I should treat him with as much respect as ever, and say not one word against him to the servants."
- "What did he say of Suor Benedetta?" Glenlyon asked, with that anxiety you might feel to know if a pure white robe had anywhere a least small stain upon it.
- "He said that it would be better to avoid speaking on the subject with her again, but that I was not to judge her, for I could not know how she might have been influenced. He told me to kneel and ask Father Segneri's blessing when he should take leave of us, for it was not probable that I would ever see him again on earth."
- "Aurora," said Glenlyon, "treasure every word that man says to you; and speak of him but little. Never praise him to his face, and carry him only the serious business of your soul. He is sacred."

And, mcantime, they had all forgotten the duchess, except that Father Segneri had written at once to say that the family at the castle evidently knew nothing of him, and that the Suor Benedetta had set several servants on the watch, and whispered the story to two or three persons, who would carry the whisper in a wider circle, and nodded

her head up and down to each in mentioning the English girl at the astle, which set other heads nodding up and down. She would not say anything against Aurelia, because it would not be charitable,—naybe in her heart she knew that it would not be safe,—but her nodding and grimaces were worse than words, since anything might be imagined from them.

All the duchess's friends to whom she had confided her alarm were of one mind. They thought that she alarmed herself unnecessarily. Don Leopoldo was probably amusing himself in some other city, or he was hanging about in disguise to see the English girl at the castle, whom they all held to be a very sly and subtle creature. He would appear in time, and be annoyed by all this searching and inquiry.

But the mother had more reason than they gave her credit for, and those convictions of the instinct which can never be conveyed to another. It was true that she and Leopold had had more than one stormy interview, and that he had absented himself from the family dinner-table, where he had been wont to appear. It was true that he had defended Aurelia, and declared that, though she had refused him, he would never cease to hope to win her till he saw her the wife of another. Nevertheless, he had shown a desire to conciliate, and he had promised that he would neither engage himself nor marry without his mother's knowledge.

That he might slip away to see the girl, was no more than probable; but he would have accomplished the visit quickly. His valet's story confirmed this; and the anxiety of the valet himself, who persisted in declaring that he did not know where his master was, proved that something must have gone wrong. Even the duke owned this, though at first he had paid but little attention to his wife's talk on the subject; and when a few days had passed, he thought best to set the secret police to making some inquiries.

By this means Don Leopoldo was traced to a railway-station a few miles from Rome; but there all signs of him ceased. The sleepy guardians of the place did not know the young man's face. At the station of Sassovivo, the man who sat up for the night train was a new-comer, and could neither recognize nor remember who had come every night for a week, the less so that all trains had been crowded with soldiers and officers coming for the grand manœuvres. If some one

had slipped through unseen and without giving his ticket, who could wonder?

At this mention of the army the duchess's mind conceived a new terror. Colonel d'Rubiera had been at Sassovivo; Colonel d'Rubiera was the next heir: he had assassinated her son! She had at last found out the truth, she declared. Nothing would convince her that she had not. The most that could be done was to prevent her making an open accusation.

- "Colonel d'Rubiera is not capable of such an act," the duke said.
- "What! not to win a dukedom?" his wife cried. "Is there anything a man will not do for that?"
- "I really think there is nothing in that, dear duchess," the Countess Emilia said soothingly. "He could not have known if Leopold was there. Besides, his mother died while he was in Sassovivo, or the news reached him there, and he must have been too much preoccupied with his sorrow to think of anything else except his duty."
 - "How do you know all this?" demanded the duchess.
- "Aurora wrote me. The colonel, with another officer, had rooms at the castle."

The duchess threw up her arms and uttered a scream: "It is enough! Leopold went to the castle. That brigand saw him. He has soldiers at his command. He has killed my son! The girl knows, and this sudden engagement of hers is got up to hide the truth!"

It was useless to reason with her. The best that they could hope to do was to quiet her.

"If such a suspicion gets out, dear," said her husband, "it will put the criminals on their guard, if criminals there be. Trust me to do everything that can be done, and that without delay."

Later, meeting the countess alone, the duke looked at her with sharp inquiry. "Can you think this possible?" he said.

"No," she said abruptly. "He is a Piedmontese, and a soldier."
His eyes dropped. "You think, then, that we Roman civilians——"
he began; but she struck in cordially,—

"I think that you, Duke Marcantonio, are noble enough to understand him!"

And she fled from him like a shadow; for his quickly-lifted face was all too bright.

CHAPTER XXV.

. LA SPERANZA.

ERE is a region among the mountains not far from Sassovivo no hand has ever been cultivated. Wild rocks, steep, pointed ains almost as regular in form as pyramids, where even sheep oats can find no footing on the crumbling, gravelly sides, and t-beds for valleys,—these make up a savage nature which no lturalist has ever had the courage, or the folly, to attack.

one of the least exaggerated of these heights is an arid little called the Rocca,—a cluster of ancient stone houses beside the cling ruins of what once was a mediæval fortress-castle lifted high the clouds into the blue crystalline air. A poor and hardy set ople live here, and there is a pretty church, and a fatherly old, who, while yet young, fled away from honors and temptations to life of simple usefulness upon the heights. They call him the tico. It was this Canonico whom Father Segneri had gone to a day with.

e public road, taking an easy, roundabout way from Sassovivo, is but there is a shorter path across, which the priest chose. A y took him half-way in the early morning; the remainder of the ey was two miles of difficult walking. He sent the man and his y back, and stood where they had left him, in a spot known to as the Punto del Paradiso, and but little visited by any one else. hose who go on foot all the way from Sassovivo to the Rocca is a still shorter way; and this Punto leads to nothing but a left is a vision of near fantastic mountain-peaks, and melting ces of pearl and purple, and of certain green valleys flowing like emeralds not so far away but that in summer you can catch lighting shadows where the breeze touches the corn-tops, and the blosg lentils, that are tall enough to hide a horse wandering among Round the bases of the mountains and down their riven sides

the torrents froth and flow when the great rains come, and their dry beds gleam white, like skeletons, when the hot sun is out. There are little fairy nooks among the rocks,—small verdant hollows full of sweet mountain-pinks or crocuses, which you may find in February when the year is kind. Southward from the Punto a long ravine cleaves all the heights with a great gash, and shows the plain round Sassovivo, and the railway-station, in a line as straight as an arrow. Only a step above this dark ravine there are some caves where, many a year ago, a few tons of red *pozzolana* were dug out. But the mine has long been exhausted, and, being so hard to reach, never paid well.

Father Segneri paused on the height above these deserted caves, and looked off toward the plain and the south. Just at his feet a thick, rough, evergreen bush grew against a protruding rock. The bush was so thick that only the sides of what seemed a single ledge were visible to right and left; but one pushing away the spiny foliage would see that two rocks were bowed together, leaving a large crevice between them next the earth. It was large enough for a man to push through, and as black as an ink-bottle.

Such holes seen in the mountains make one think of vipers, and draw back, shivering; but Father Segneri had other thoughts. A small, white-haired old man in a long black robe that made his pallid face look still more pale, he stood alone upon the mountain and looked out in search of heaven, if indeed some peaceful meadow of it might be seen from hence more clearly off beyond the rough, dark rocks and torrent-beds of life.

As he looked, two eyes gazed out at him from the rocky crevice, eyes brighter than a viper's, and a man drew himself slowly up by one hand, a dagger in the other; and a breath hot with desperate hate and fear half syllabled the words, "So you have tracked me, you cursed spy! I know you!"

If the priest had turned his back then, his earthly troubles would have soon been over. He only stood and gazed until tears quenched his sight.

"Oh! how cruel man can be!" he cried. "But should I, my Lord, complain, who took upon my life thy crucified name?"

He wiped his eyes, and spoke again, as if he spoke to one quietly, face to face. "The Canonico is unworldly. He turned his back long

years ago on all that pride and vanity. He is sure to say some comforting, strengthening word."

He sighed, restored his handkerchief to his pocket, and gathered himself to continue his journey. "I seem to grow weak and child-ish," he said, and sighed again. "I never felt such need before of human comfort." And, turning, he went on his upward way.

While he spoke, the creeping form had become fixed and listening, and the knife was drawn back. A soul upon the verge of hell looked up and saw upon the verge of heaven a soul which wept. What! did they suffer too, these men who claim for their own the goods both of earth and heaven?

"I will not harm him!" said poor Lorenzo, whose rage was ever close upon tears; and, after watching for a moment and making sure that the priest went on up the steep neck that led toward the Rocca, he drew softly backward down through a rough passage, rock to rock, till he reached a small chamber, half natural cavern, half excavated. This chamber was lighted by a tiny fissure in the ceiling, and at this hour a fine, splintered sunray made a lamp of gold in the dark rock vault. Two heaps of straw and corn-husks, one at either side, were covered with coarse gray blankets. There was a shelf formed of a board laid across two projecting points of rock, and on the shelf were various articles and food,—half a large loaf of bread, a piece of cheese, some salted and dried fish, a tumbler, a knife, and a spirit lamp and coffce-pot. On another projecting bit of the rock, which made a small natural shelf, stood a flask half full of wine. Two rifles, wrapped in woollen rags to keep them from becoming damp, hung on the wall.

While Renzo, startled by the sound of steps and voices on the mountain, had crawled up the long tortuous passage to see what was going on, the chamber had not been left untenanted. Martello stood there listening, with open mouth and suspended breath, his two hands grasping the two rifles and ready to snatch them down at a word, and his eyes glancing with sharp watchfulness from the hidden entrance of the upward passage to a rough door, covered with skins, at the opposite side of the chamber.

Presently his companion appeared, coming backward down the passage, which was too narrow to turn in, stepped out into the open space, and rubbed his knees that had been bruised on the rocks.

"It is nothing," he said. "A priest is going to the Rocca, and he came on a donkey to the Punto. I have seen him at the villa. But it is nothing."

Martello let go the rifles, and seated himself on his straw bed. The sounds had disturbed a conference. They resumed it. Martello had been urging, even insisting rather imperatively, that a certain letter should be written, and Renzo, after postponing it as long as he could, had been brought to that point of silence which precedes consent, or is taken for consent.

"And who, then, is to carry it?" asked Martello, taking the letter as a matter settled.

A long silence followed. These two men had no confidential agents abroad; they were alone in their enterprise, and neither of them wished to be seen. Martello studied over the subject sitting motionless, with his arms on his knees, and his face sullen and drooping,—Renzo with an electric snapping of his nervous system, his eyelids winking while his eyes seemed to be occupied with the straw he twisted in his fingers, his lips twitching now and then, his head giving now and then a jerk. It was their different ways of doing the same thing.

At length Renzo lifted his eyes, and found the other looking at him. Only the steady black eyes had raised themselves: the man had not moved hand, foot, nor head. Renzo made a motion with his hand to indicate that Martello must perform the task.

" Già!" replied Martello, having already arrived at the same conclusion.

Renzo got up and went to the shelf. He took down the spiritlamp and set it on the stone floor, and, filling a small tin saucepan with water, proceeded to make some coffee. Not a word was said. Martello, his task assumed, was studying how he should perform it.

The fragrance of coffee began to diffuse itself about the place, and the splintered sunray above, that had been a mere spray of golden flame, began creeping along the air in a golden line, as the sun moved. As Renzo stood up and moved about, this creature of heaven touched his head. It shone in a star on his black curls, it touched his forehead and showed a ruined face, it alighted on his lips and made them seem to smile, it hung just above him. Tiny as it was, it beautified the place. Renzo, busy with the breakfast, did not notice it. But

r a while Martello, having apparently made up his mind what was e done, lifted his face, and looked at that bright thing in the air. years he had seen it come in there on cloudless days, and he ys lifted his dark face to look at it. He had named it "La anza." It was all the bright hope he knew. To him it was like ild in the house, or an angel, or a promise. It was the dearer and ter for being so vague. He used to say in the morning, when he a nebulous star begin to glow in the ceiling, "La Speranza is ng;" and when that line of beautiful radiance entered unafraid, co La Speranza!" he would say. He never smiled at it, but only d with a dull confused sense of adoration; but, as he stared, a at vague ray of something, he knew not what, stole into the dark rn of his brain and softly dropped a golden star into his gloomy When, but a little after noon, that sunray, having signed the ent of a circle through the cavernous air, disappeared all at once, man's face grew darker, for his hope had gone. There was a dar marked on the wall of its coming and going, and when he not in hiding he kept a line of roses set from the first point where ghted on the rocks round to the last, so that the creature should daintily and softly, like a queen. Roses were never lacking the round in the gardens down below; but he had not dared to go hem in these days. Only, the night before, in coming through avine where Betta met him with a loaf of bread and a flask of , he had snatched a daisy from the ground. It shone against the now, a tiny sun, with the light in its golden heart.

enzo poured out a cup of coffee for Martello, then for himself; when they had eaten their breakfast he prepared coffee again, poured out a third cup, his face growing bitter as he did so, as gh he hated the task.

artello, meanwhile, had put some bread and fish and cheese in a of paper, and had carefully tied a black crape veil over his head, ing both hair and throat. He then changed the shabby coat he for a ragged one, and pulled the cuffs of the sleeves down so as most cover his hands. Next he thrust an ink-bottle, paper, and nto his pocket, and, taking the breakfast, went toward the skined door. Renzo softly opened it, drawing a wooden bar, and with his head thrust out, listening. There was nothing visible

beyond the door but a wall of tufa, such as one sees in pozzolana caves, at the other side of a passage scarcely two feet wide; and the reddish hair of the skin on the outside of the door had been wet with some gluey substance and encrusted with fine gravel.

Renzo drew back and nodded, and Martello passed the door, stooping and edging sideways along a dark passage, stooped again still lower, and came out into a pozzolana cave where an arched opening could be dimly seen leading downward into still another cave. Here he paused while Renzo, who had followed him closely, slipped quietly down the rude steps and disappeared. He had gone to look out at the lower entrance. In a minute he returned, lighted a candle, and unbarred and unlocked a rough, strong door near which Martello had waited, standing back out of sight as he opened it, and closing it when his companion had entered.

All the centre of this upper cave was full of water, and a second below, and still a third, the lowest, through which Renzo passed again to keep his watch at the outer entrance, had each a pool of muddy water in the centre. Looking in from without, one would not have expected to find human beings living in such a place, and, searching not too closely farther on, the third chamber would have seemed the last, so artfully the doors had been disguised and hidden. Even flashing a light along the upper corridor, without entering, nothing but two rough walls would have been discovered.

These caves appear frequently in Italy, sometimes at the roadside, sometimes with strong doors, showing that they are used as store-houses, sometimes gaping open with their wide-arched entrances which show other dark arches inside and pools of muddy water in the floors. They are rather uncomfortable places to pass when the road is lonely.

While Renzo stood keeping his stealthy watch at the cave's mouth, Martello had entered a small side-chamber, and set the candle on the floor. A movement in the place, all flickering with deep darkness, and the feeble, swaying light, would at once have attracted attention toward a straw bed covered with a gray blanket, like those above, and with the addition of a coarse skin with the hair turned downward. Some one rose up in this bed as the man entered, and a face as white as marble showed in the shadows.

Martello set the cup and paper containing the food on the floor

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"Thou knowest the conditions."

beside the bed, and held up the candle. As if accustomed to this programme, the occupant of the room held out two manacled hands. Martello silently examined them to see if the fastenings had been tampered with, then released them, and gave his prisoner the food he had brought.

"Thou mayst write the letter," he said in a whisper.

An exclamation broke from the other. Then he caught the cup and drained the coffee at a draught. "Give me the pen and ink," he said eagerly.

"Eat!" said Martello.

"I can eat in the dark," said his prisoner impatiently. "It will amuse me. Give me only two inches of rope. The letter! the letter!"

Martello produced the writing-materials from his pocket, smoothed a place on the stiff skin for a writing-desk, held the candle, and dictated the terms of one of those brigand letters which demand ransom for a captive; and, with his delicate white hands trembling with eagerness, Don Leopoldo wrote it.

"Thou knowest the conditions," said Martello, in the whisper with which he always disguised his voice when speaking here.

"Yes! yes!" was the shivering reply.

"If they attempt to search for thee," the man went on, with cold precision, "or if they set a trap for him who takes the money, or if they do not send the money, thou wilt be found with a knife in thy heart."

"Am I likely to forget any particulars?" exclaimed the prisoner, shuddering. "Now go! and make haste to give the letter, for I shall die here. How long have I been in this place? A month?"

Martello made no answer, but prepared to tie his prisoner's hands again.

"Leave me a little rope, that's a good fellow," the young man begged. "What difference can it make to you? I can't escape. See how my wrists are almost bleeding! And promise me that you will make haste with the letter. I cannot bear this much longer."

"I will give thee a little rope," Martello said, and tied the hands so that a few inches of free rope were left for moving them. "Stand up now."

The prisoner stood up, and showed a second rope tied tightly about

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his waist, and fastened to the wall, where a large spike had been driven in far out of his reach. This allowed him to take a few steps.

"If I took a man so," he said, "I would treat him better. The brigands are not always so hard. Sometimes men have a gay enough time with them till the money comes. But to shut one up in darkness! To keep one tied! It isn't da galantuomo."

Martello put the letter, which he knew not how to read, carefully in his pocket, and gathered up the cup and inkstand and the candlestick.

"If thou freest thy hands to-day, I will tie thee hand and foot in the bed to-night, and keep thee so," he said then, and went out.

At the sound of the door closing, Renzo came up from his watch, and the two returned to what Martello called his casa. The little chamber under the rocks was the only home he had ever known. Born in a prison, where his father and mother were both serving their sentence for having, as they mildly called it, menato a woman,—that is, for having beaten her almost to death,-living a wandering, precarious life as long as they had lived, and alternating between seasons of honest labor and seasons of lawless adventure, with more than one visit to some prison, he had at length, in his stealthy searchings for a hidingplace, found this cave, and for long years kept its existence a secret. In those volcanic heavings which threw up the beautiful peninsula and gave the world all that we mean by Italy, the glowing bubbles cooling into stone around three great masses of crumbling matter had formed the walls of these three chambers, from which, later, the red rock sand had been dug out. But the upper one had been a heap of common earth between firm rocks as hard as flint. If long rains had washed the place out hollow, or some other fugitive had made his home there, Martello, searching for a dryer and more secure abode, had found the chamber, and had, little by little, made a habitable place He had widened the upper egress, and dug away the earth outside that no water might flow in, yet so cunningly that nature herself seemed to have done it. It was his home, and he had a sort of pride in it, and a feeling of security. He lived there as bears live in their caves, scarce wishing for a better. If they should succeed in this adventure, into which Renzo had gone even more readily than he, so that he should find himself the master of more gold than ever had been his, even in his wildest dreams, still he felt that in the end he

should come 'ack as poor as ever to his solitary cavern and his one sweetness,—La Speranza.

CHAPTER XXVI.

TWELVE BOXES OF FIGS.

LEFT alone, Don Leopoldo ate his bread and cheese. The letter which, every time his jailer came to him, he had begged to be allowed to write, written at last, filled him with hope. He was, in fact, half dead of hunger. Fear of what might happen to him, suffering, and disgust of the coarse food had made it impossible for him to eat. Besides, he had begun to feel some flushes and chills of fever. Now his appetite returned.

For now release must be near at hand. He wondered how he had lived so long in that darkness, disgust, and suspense. It seemed to him a month, though it was not yet a fortnight. He had begun to believe that the men were not brigands, after all, but were employed by some enemy to destroy him. Brigands whose sole object was money would have made him write at once for a ransom.

He had arrived at Sassovivo at night, and slipped unchallenged through the station. The station-master was engaged in another direction, and even the passengers found nothing interesting enough in that solitary place to induce them to look out. There were no carriages at that hour; and, reaching the high-road, he had started off on foot for Sassovivo. On the whole, he did not object to the walk, and, as he went along, laughed to think how he had eluded observation, and looked up at the dark outline of the castle, square against the stars, blessing the lovely head which now reposed in sleep beneath that roof.

Suddenly, without a breath of warning, a heavy cloth was thrown over his head and shoulders, his arms were pinioned, and a voice whispered him to be quiet, while the back of a knife drawn coldly across his hand was still more convincing.

Renzo and Martello had watched for him every night for a week. "He is sure to come!" Renzo had insisted.

They had kept themselves hidden by day, but came out at dusk in search of food, not always lawfully obtained, and then, concealing themselves in a vigna opposite the station, watched till the night-train came by. The road had to make a turn around this vigna, coming back opposite the station, and the two had had time to run across and choose their position before Don Leopoldo reached them.

They marched him along between them, looking warily up and down the road for possible passengers. At that hour no one cared much to go about the campagna, and not a soul appeared. They entered the Serpentino. The town was all dark above them, though a nearer view might have shown thin streaks of light behind many a closed shutter. They passed under the castle and the villa; they were almost at Betta's door; the dogs barked from more than one place at the stealthy sound of their steps; but each time, as a quiver of hope ran over the prisoner, and his nerves tightened for a struggle, the bare steel touched his hand, and his heart sickened and sank. He did not doubt that their object was money, and that his release was sure if they obtained it; but how much was he to suffer before that time? Besides, even in his fear and anger, he was conscious of a feeling of mortification at being so caught, when there could be only one explanation of his being there.

His captors were not rough. Except for those intimations that he would not be allowed to make a sound, they seemed disposed to help him over the road, which grew so rough at last that he could scarcely keep his footing. He even fancied that he could have bribed them to let him go if he could have spoken. But it was impossible to speak through that rough mantle, which scarcely allowed him to breathe freely.

He tried to guess what direction they were taking, but his calculations were quite contrary to the truth. It seemed to him that they were going through the country toward the east of Sassovivo, when they were going toward the west.

At last they arrived at what he believed to be a house. He fancied a court-yard, and heard a foot of one of his conductors splash in a pool of water. A door opened. They entered, and there was the sound of

a scraping match, and a faint light became visible. They uncovered his head, and he found himself in what he supposed to be a rude cellar. with two men whose faces were covered with crape masks. They did not utter a word in reply to his questions and promises of reward and pardon, but, tying him lightly, went out, taking the candle with them and locking him into darkness.

Don Leopoldo knew too well the etiquette of such affairs to struggle. He lay down, shivering with disgust at the musty smell of the bed, and the rough skin over him, and waited for day. No day came. A man came to him at long intervals with food, and, when he begged permission to write to his family, answered, "Wait!"

And so a long, horrible night dragged on,—a night which to others was many an alternation of stars and sunshine. To him it was a torture unspeakable. The disgust of his surroundings and the suffering from being so bound and cramped were nothing to the darkness. He was sick with longing for daylight; his heart ached to see the sky. The thought of Aurelia became to him a feverish dream. Dearer than any woman was the fresh green grass, and the wind and sun in his face.

It was always the same man who came, he of the steady voice and hand. The other had trembled, he remembered,—trembled always. Was it with fear? A duke's son is not so easily hidden and forgotten that one might not fear to try such an enterprise. And this steady, cold voice had but one word for him: "Wait!"

He lay and waited, listening for some sound from outside his prison which should tell him where he was. He heard a tempest. The thunders rolled, and it seemed to him that there was a glimmer of lightning around his door. And then there was a low continuous sound which must have been rain, and a rippling sound of running water.

Then, after a long interval which he could not reckon, he thought he heard a bird sing; and the darkness about him became the darkness of a midnight grove where nightingales answered each other. He was losing his reason.

His jailer came and found him trying weakly to sing. He forced him to eat, and gave him wine to drink; and these brought him back to a consciousness of his position.

- "We must get rid of him," Martello said then to Renzo. "He will die."
 - "Let him die!" was the retort.
- "What good will that do us?" urged Martello. "Thou art an ass. If we have money, we can go to some other town."
- "Can I leave my face behind?" cried Renzo, then began to sob, and curse the day in which he was born.

Martello looked at him in silence a little while. His face was unmoved, but he may have felt some pity. Renzo was nearer to him than any other of his companions had ever been, and he showed a patience with him which might have sprung from affection. Then the fellow depended on him, and told him everything.

"Thou art not so ugly," he said presently. "Those stains are losing their color. There is a curl which will hide the scar in the eyebrow, and the moustache will cover thy lip. After a few months thy face will smooth out."

He never reproached Renzo with weakness, and this time again, contrary to his own will, he yielded, and said once more to his prisoner, "Wait!"

But now the letter was written, and hope trembled in Don Leopoldo's heart. To pass the aching, terrified hours, he thought over old pleasures in Paris, and in the midst of his squalor reviewed the luxury of that life. But it had lost a certain charm; and once again his thoughts reverted to Aurelia. Did she know that he was missing? Where was she? What was she thinking of?

She was standing beside Robert McLellan, saying a few words to Glenlyon before they should leave him to go out for their afternoon walk.

"Robert will stay one day more," she said. "He has heard of a fine view which he wishes to see. Some one in Rome told him of it, and he finds that we can go up on horses or donkeys in half an hour. I will have Robert take my horse. I should not dare go up a mountain except on a donkey."

Glenlyon asked where the place was.

- "The Punto del Paradiso," she answered. "Aurora knows of it." Aurora appeared at that moment, looking rather serious.
- "Well?" Glenlyon said to her. Mariù was sick, and she had been with her.

"She has a bad headache, but says that she wants nothing. I think she would rather be quiet."

"I am afraid that she has never fully recovered from the fall she had last month," Glenlyon said.

"Giovanna thinks she has some fever, and that she took cold last night. She went to sleep with her head at the open kitchen window," Aurora answered.

Mariù's sleep in the kitchen window had happened in this wise. Suor Benedetta had not trusted alone to Aurora to teach the servants of the castle their duty toward Father Segneri; and, besides, she wished to make some inquiries on account of the duchess. She had therefore sent Chiara round there the evening before, after Aurora's visit to her, with directions to try in every way to ascertain if they had any knowledge of Don Leopoldo.

Chiara was a very good messenger, and approached her subject in the most innocent manner. Seated by the kitchen table with Gian and Giovanna, she exposed very pathetically Father Segneri's case, and had just begun on the other, when she heard a deep sigh from where Mariù sat apart by an open window. The girl's head had fallen down on the window-sill. They thought that she was asleep. She had fainted. When, after a long visit, Gian and Giovanna, having seen their gossip out into the court-yard as wise as she came, returned to wake Mariù, she had disappeared, and they heard her in her own chamber.

Mariù's fever and headache, then, were the fever of anxiety and the headache that comes from the heart.

What to do? She tried to think, and found thinking impossible. Since the moment when, at something that Chiara had said, her head had suddenly swung with a ringing sound, like a bell that is struck, she had felt confused and stupid. She wanted to be let alone, and not to hear a human voice. Even the kindness of the family oppressed her. If only everybody would let her alone! If only she could go away to some quiet place where no one could find her! It was a relief to her when she heard the young people go out and thought that for an hour or two no one was likely to come to her.

And then, even while she was looking forward thankfully to a time of quiet in which she might collect her thoughts, her door was opened, not too softly, and Giovanna came in.

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"I came in so as not to see that Protestant," she said, appearing to forget that Mariù was sick. "He is coming down the Gola now with his valise in his hand, as if he were going to stay. I told Jenny that you wanted me to sit with you."

"What Protestant?" Mariù asked despairingly, seeing before hera long torment of restless talk.

"Father Segneri." Giovanna put on a look of severe disapprobation in uttering the name. "Didn't you hear Chiara say that he has been turned out of his order, and that he goes about talking and preaching of the Bible like a Protestant?"

It was, in fact, Father Segneri, and he had his valise in his hand. A little boy had brought it as far as the outer gate for him, then gone on to the piazza to engage a post for him in the railroad diligence which would start in half an hour.

There was no one but Jenny to meet the priest, Gian being out, and she did not know how to form a sentence which he could understand. But she ushered him into the drawing-room, where Glenlyon sat alone.

"I hope that I am not intruding," the priest said brightly. "I have come to take leave of you."

Glenlyon welcomed him cordially. "But what do you mean by taking leave?" he asked. "I thought that you would remain a week in Sassovivo."

"I have changed my mind," returned Father Ségneri, with an air of cheerfulness, and glanced at Jenny, who was leaving the room. When the door had closed behind her, he looked at Glenlyon, and his cheerful air dropped like a mask. "I am obliged to go!" he said in an agitated voice, and sank into a chair.

Glenlyon stood before him. "Obliged, sir!" he exclaimed. "What obliges you?"

The priest smiled faintly, and, drawing a chair near to his own, motioned his host to seat himself there, and, when he did so, laid a quieting hand on his arm. "It is all very simple," he said, controlling his own emotion when he saw his friend becoming excited. "Don't let it give you any trouble. I am not surprised. It is simply what I had to expect. The Bishop of Sassovivo has reproved Fra Antonio for having received me."

"And Fra Antonio?" Glenlyon's voice was choked, and his face ad become crimson.

"Fra Antonio is a Christian," the priest replied. "He said that e could not turn me into the street. Of course the bishop reproved im in order to please them at Rome; and, having shown his zeal, he light wink at my staying in the convent a few days, always, be it inderstood, under his proclaimed displeasure. But then a cloud would fall on Fra Antonio, and he would be made to suffer in some way, and that I could not permit. I begged him to turn me out, and, when he would not, I left him. Poor Fra Antonio! he was crying like a child!"

"Stay with me!" Glenlyon implored.

The priest shook his head. "It would give them a chance for other slanders," he said. "They would suppress the fact that I was turned into the street by them, and spread everywhere the story that I had gone to live with a Protestant family."

Glenlyon bowed his face into his hands. He felt all the despairing rage of an honorable and courageous person who beholds a triumphant baseness which it is impossible to contend with.

"Is it any matter what they say?" he asked then. "Is not their evil speech a crown of honor to the head it falls upon?"

"I am a priest," Father Segneri said. "Otherwise I should laugh at their slanders and ill will. But, remember, they have the Pope in their hands. That is their strength. And what is a priest separated from the Pope?"

"Sir," Glenlyon exclaimed, almost with anger, "do you forget God?"

"Not at all," replied the priest calmly. "A man may easily be separated from God and be under no bar from the Pope, and vice versa. For my conscience, I am at rest. But the Pope might take my mass from me. Let me go in peace, and live out the little remainder of my life as much in the manner of the life I vowed to live as I can."

Jenny appeared. "Please, sir," she said, "there's a boy come for the clergyman, and says that the diligence is about to start."

Father Segneri rose.

"Allow me to go with you to the piazza," Glenlyon said. "Jenny, bring me my hat and overcoat."

"My heart is on fire!" he exclaimed in Italian, turning to his visitor.

They went down-stairs together. Not a soul was in sight. Only a flutter of Giovanna's disappearing petticoat caught her master's glance as they passed the kitchen door.

- "Where are the servants?" Glenlyon asked angrily.
- "Mariù is in bed, sir," said Jenny; "and she wanted Giovanna to sit with her. And Gian has gone to the piazza to post the letters, sir. Can I do anything?"
- "Oh!" her master said, relieved from his suspicions, and took pains at once to explain to Father Segneri why everybody was out of sight. "Poor Aurora will be disappointed not to see you. She talked of you with me last night."
- "Give her my blessing," the priest said, and, in spite of the explanation, could not help a chilly feeling that this utter desertion was not accidental.

Jenny followed them to the door, and courtesied there.

- "Jenny, he is a good man," Glenlyon said. "Would not you like to kiss his hand?"
- "Oh, sir, I never kissed a man's hand in my life," she said, blushing, and coming hesitatingly forward. "But if you wish----"

The priest understood her bashful advance, and held out his hand with a sad smile; and she kissed it, and went back into the house with tearful eyes. "It is all so solemn," she thought.

"Yes; there go the Protestants kissing his hand now," said Giovanna to herself, having watched the scene through the half-shut kitchen door.

The two went out through the Gola, and were just entering the street, when they heard an exclamation behind them, and, turning, saw Aurora hastening toward them with rosy cheeks and startled eyes, and Robert and Aurelia a little behind her. She ran to Father Segneri. "You are not going away?" she asked breathlessly.

- "Yes, figlia mia, I am going away," he replied, in a cheerful voice. "Did you think that I was to pass the rest of my life in Sassovivo?"
- "But you said-" she began, and then stopped. She had got possession of one end of his girdle, and stood twisting the fringe of it

nervously in her fingers, and looking with an auxious questioning into his face.

"Man proposes and God disposes," he said, and understood that he knew, and was true.

The other two joined them, and they all went toward the piazza gether. It was a little gleam of comfort to this man so basely persecuted, not so much that there were those who understood and respected him as that he had found some one whom he could respect.

Their visitor gone, the family went back to the castle in silence. Henlyon walked with his head bowed down, and uttered not a word; nd when they reached home he shut himself into his room. Nor id he appear again till dinner-time.

When dinner was over, and they had returned to the drawing-room, e asked Aurora to call all the servants up, as he had something to by to them; and, seating himself in his arm-chair, with an air of elemn preparation, he waited for them to appear.

"Something has been stolen," thought Aurelia, who had once seen 'r guardian sit in judgment when a sum of money was missing. She membered the first words that broke on the uneasy silence of that sembled London household: "Thou shalt not steal!" Then the add reproof and pleading, the prophecy of a degraded life, the denuntions of eternal punishment, and the last words he had uttered bete leaving a space of silence for confession: "He is not fallen who is; but he is fallen who will not rise again!" Then the poor penite creature weeping at his feet, and his last words to all: "This is r prodigal son. My children, let none of you betray his fault and t me to shame!"

His servants liked Glenlyon.

Gian and Giovanna came in, followed by Mariù, who found that ng in bed did not bring her quiet. Aurelia and Robert looked out m a window, and Aurora, whose heart told her what was coming, ik into a low stool by Glenlyon's elbow. Jenny, confident and unaid, stood just inside the door, and smilingly awaited the dénoucent.

"I want to speak to you of the Reverend Father Segneri," he said, a voice whose sadness, weakness even, was all unlike that stern exunder of the ten commandments. "There is some talk abroad

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concerning him, and he has enemies who are trying to do him all the harm they can. There are men in priest's clothing who are wolves, as you all know; but he is not one. Beware how one of you believes anything told you of so good a man, no matter who may tell you. Perhaps some one may talk to you of him. There is not the least taint of heresy in him. I tell you this, and I know. No matter what the trouble is; you would not understand. But mark this: if I should ever know that one of you speaks against him, or, meeting him, fails to treat him with respect, that one will leave my house immediately."

"I thought that Mariù ought not to stay alone, sir," Giovanna said, betraying herself. "I'm sure I never meant—"

"Some one has been here, then!" exclaimed Glenlyon. "Who was it?" he asked, turning to Gian.

Gian was fairly writhing with deprecation and excuses. "Why, sir, Chiara was here last evening," he said, "and she just happened to say something or other. Women will talk. But it didn't amount to anything at all. And as to being disrespectful to Father Segneri, Nanna and I are as innocent as water."

"You mean that Chiara just happened to bring a slander here, and that you will just happen to carry it a little farther," Glenlyon broke in angrily. "You may all just happen to fall into hell one day! Get out of my sight!"

He rose as he spoke, and his gesture was so fierce that they required no second bidding.

Mariù had no recollection of having heard Chiara say a word about the priest, and she had almost forgotten what they had been called to the drawing-room for when she reached the foot of the stairs. Going to the outer door, she stood a moment looking into the dark court-yard, listening to the bells ringing the first hour of night. Then she sauntered down the steps and across the court, and leaned against the side of the gate there, staring out into the Gola. And, having remained there a few minutes, she went forward, as if the invisible coil of a mesmeric cord had silently lassoed her passive, hopeless will.

Having reached the street, she knew what she wanted to do, and, rousing herself, started off on a run for the rocks, and down the villa and the avenue to Betta. She did not observe a man who drew

quickly under the trees of the Serpentino as she crossed it, nor know that he followed her at a distance and placed himself so that he could see whoever entered or left the farm-house.

Betta was alone. The woman who lived with her, more companion than servant, since they worked together, had gone down to the cellar to fill some quarteruole with new wine that must be sent up to the town early in the morning. With a long brass lamp set on the clay floor and throwing its beautiful light in a bright circle that blurred off at the edges into a dense blackness of great cantine, a half-dozen little casks standing firmly on end beside her, one lying down and held firm by one of her feet at each end of it, and the head of an immense hogshead looming moist and black before her, this woman contentedly performed her task. A litro bottle with a tunnel in its mouth in her left hand, she leaned slightly forward, turned the facet in the hogshead with her right, and watched the amber liquid flow sparkling and foaming, as if rejoiced to find itself wine. Then, leaning back, she placed the tunnel in the quartervola, and emptied the bottle there with a new gurgle and sparkle. When the bottle was too full to tip without spilling, the woman sipped the top off it. It was almost always too full.

The last bottle which would have filled the cask was only half emptied into it, but began another, the health of their customers requiring a slight admixture of water, which admixture is known in Italy as "baptizing" the wine. But this division frequently produced a great confusion after several casks had been filled, and the filler might have been seen with tears in her eyes counting over the casks and trying to reckon how many whole bottles it took to put a half-bottle into each of so many whole casks. If it had been half-bottles into half-casks, or whole bottles into whole casks, the question would have been less difficult; but the mixture of halves and wholes became at length so inextricable that she might have sat there all night puzzling over it, if Betta had not come down to assist her fractions.

But when Mariù arrived the woman had only just gone down to the cellar, and Betta was alone, mending stockings, her husband being up in the town. The two sat for some time talking dryly, as people will when each is trying to make the other say something without uttering what is on her own mind.

At length, glancing around with a frightened air, Mariù said, "Chiara was at the house last night."

"Oh! how is Chiara?" asked Betta, carefully picking up the stitches in a hole in the stocking on her hand.

"She says they think that Don Leopoldo came to see the signorines."

Inglese," she went on in a whisper, taking no notice of the question

"I don't believe it!" Betta replied almost violently. "Chiara is always poking her nose into other people's business. Hasn't the signon one into a lover now, a beautiful young man? They passed by her to-day. It was plain that he loves her, and she him. Mark my word of Mariù," she dropped her work, and whispered in her turn,—"you detter say as I do. It does no good to meddle with the affairs of great folks. I know nothing about them."

"Yes," said Mariù, and slipped a feverish hand on Betta's wrist.

"And have you had no news of him?"

"No. How should I?" Betta answered gruffly aloud, and, rising, went to look down the stairs leading to the cellar, then to see that the house door was well closed. Then she came back, and, stooping over Mariù, whispered in her ear, "Martello is living somewhere near,—I don't know, and don't want to know, where. I don't know whether anybody's with him or not, and I don't want to know. He don't seem to want to be seen. Perhaps he has been stealing some little thing. I met him one day up the ravine, when my pig ran away and I went after it. He wanted me to carry him something to eat and leave it there, and I did; and every day I have carried bread and cheese and a flask of wine. It wouldn't do to make him angry. He said he would pay. What do I care whether he does or not? I know nothing against the poor fellow, and I'm not going to let anybody starve."

She had made a pretence of examining Mariù's shawl while whispering this in her ear. She straightened herself up, began to hum a tune, and went about on a new reconnoissance, then came back again. "I haven't given him anything to-day," she said.

"Why not?" Mariù breathed through her white lips.

A third circuit of the place. Then the answer came: "There's some one watching!"

A faint moan trembled over Mariù's lips. "I will carry them something," she said eagerly. It was just what Betta wanted. She was afraid of being caught and accused of aiding some unknown crime, and she was afraid of offending Martello and having forever after to dread his dark face round her somewhat unprotected home. She had told the truth to Mariù. She did not know what might have happened. As to her suspicions, that was another question.

She beckoned her visitor into her bedroom, gave her the great pockets she used, and left her to put them on; and when Mariù came out, there was a flask of wine with a paper twisted over it, some bread and cheese, and a little paper of coffee and one of sugar.

"There is a window open in the other bedroom," Betta said, when all was ready; "and there is a low place in the garden wall behind the house. I don't care what you do. What is it to me? I'm going down cellar to see what my woman is about."

Mariù looked at her beseechingly: "But I don't know where-"

Betta whispered to her, "Set the things under the last olive-tree text to the ravine,—the one that has a broken branch hanging to the ground. Don't lose a minute, and don't make a sound. Come back as you go."

She began to sing again, then went down to the cellar and talked loudly, to be heard by any one who might listen outside. She baptized the wine, and hammered the bungs into the casks, and set her woman to filling out a barrel, bringing her a handful of corn to count the *litri* by. Then she went up-stairs again.

It was not long before there was a sound in the bedroom, and Mariù appeared, red, perspiring, and out of breath with running. A nod was exchanged, and then Betta opened the house door.

"Well, since you are not afraid to go alone," she said, in a loud voice, and took leave of her guest on the door-step with a profusion of good-nights, and waited till Mariù called back that she had reached the road in safety.

All which precautions would have been excellent but for a certain window-shutter with a crack in it through which a pair of eyes had been able to make a valuable addition to the testimony of their associated ears.

An hour later the Sindaco of Sassovivo sent a telegram to a friend of his in Rome asking that a dozen boxes of prime dried figs should be sent to him,—those pretty boxes done up to look like little books, with white pine-cone seeds and pistachio-nuts, beryl-green, here and there among the fruit, and a hint of cinnamon,—books that you slice straight through the gilt binding, and that are understood by people of every tongue without the need of a translator.

It was supposed at the telegraph office that the sindaco was going to give a dinner-party.

The same night, toward morning, an unusual number of passengers got off the cars at the Sassovivo station. There were three very gay young men with rifles, and elaborate hunting-equipments to make the quails tremble under their gray feathers. There was an old man with a very tall old wife who took very mincing little steps. There was a very alert young woman with her maid, both well muffled up against the night-air. There were two stupid contadini, and there were two English tourists of uncertain sex, with hats, ulsters, and guide-books, who made very frequent use of the expression "Oll raït!"

Very prime figs, all of them, but scarcely so polyglot as the little spiced ones in the boxes.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PUNTO DEL PARADISO.

THE next day was fine, with a clear-blowing Maestro in the morning, that carried every particle of mist off to the southeast seas, till near noonday, when, finding that it was losing its Latin, the whole sky being a crystal, it stopped suddenly in an utter calm, which had a non so che of surprise.

A more perfect day for a mountain-view could not be dreamed of, and the young people were ready to set out directly after luncheon. Robert had concluded to ride a donkey, and there was a third one for Mariù, who had contrived to obtain permission to go and carry a lunch. She had said that the mountain-air always did her good, that she had never been up the Punto, and she looked so wistful that at last Glen-

lyon observed it, and asked her if she would like to go with the young ladies.

Her eager assent settled the matter, and it was therefore quite a large party that assembled in the court-yard, which the shadow of the castle cut from corner to corner in a rugged line that showed every break in the stone walls between two great triangles of pavement, one of a transparent gray, the other golden with the sun.

"I can get you a donkey now, signorina," Gian said to Aurora, as she stood looking at her horse. "The road is not so smooth."

"No, thank you, Gian," she answered. "See well to the girths, and, if the saddle stays on, I think that I shall stay on."

Mariù, mounting in a chair, seated herself on a clumsy saddle with her feet thrust out at each side of the animal's neck. She had such a color, and her eyes were so quick and bright, that even Jenny, though little used to the omnipresent fever of Italy, noticed her as looking feverish.

*Poor Mariù!" Giovanna said to Glenlyon. "She is wearing herself out in worrying over her ragazzo." Which made Glenlyon think that he would ask an explanation later. No one in his house must orry if he could help it.

They were all mounted, and they rode gayly away, Aurora leading, and running little races alone, then returning to her company, only to away from them again, to Gian's great admiration. "She rides then times better than the Inglese," he thought.

Aurelia rode soberly after, smiling at her friend when she saw her sushed and sparkling face. "That dear, joyous creature!" she said. And, in fact, the mountain air inebriated the girl.

Mariù brought up the rear with a luncheon-basket set on the saddle in front of her, and her bright eyes glancing and searching everywhere. Gian was on foot, and occupied himself with admonishing now one, now another of the donkeys, as, after the manner of their kind, they insisted on taking the extreme outer edge of the path, delighted, apparently, when they could hold their riders suspended over an abyss, or some steep, smooth declivity where there was no stopping-place from top to bottom, and where, falling, one might expect to continue to roll downward for an indefinite time. And he gathered flowers for Aurelia, and she sat quite easily in her

saddle arranging a bouquet, the reins hanging loosely on her donkey's neck.

"I shall paint you so, Aurelia," her lover said. And, truly, a pture of her would have been an idyl.

Everything was peaceful, pure, and lofty. The two lovers, wrap ed in a soft mist of human affection, admired the scene with a sense of each other's presence. But Aurora, leaving off play when they reached the upper air, trembled with awe beneath those austere influences where the haunt the mountain-tops. She remembered what she had read the evening before of a battle of the Israelites. "Their gods are gods of the hills, and therefore they are stronger than we," said the conquered Syrians.

They reached the Punto, a little space of table-land, where the road widened and stopped from going higher, though a slender path turned and trickled down at the other side of the mountain opposite Sassovivo,—the path that Martello had taken in the morning.

Slipping from her saddle, Aurora stood by a part of the ledge that pushed itself up in a sort of parapet, with an evergreen bush growing before it. Robert and Aurelia had already placed themselves on a low, mossy seat farther on; and, seeing that she wished, apparently, to be undisturbed, they let her alone. Gian fastened their animals with the four noses unanimously attacking a small bundle of hay. brought her luncheon-basket to Aurelia, and left it there at the feet of the lovers, then began to wander about uneasily. She went to every steep place and looked over, she looked searchingly down the road by which they had come, and up the rugged path that led to the Rocca. And after each little excursion she came back to where Aurora stood, and gazed along the ravine, which, being just then in the line of the sun, was not so dark as usual. Some of the trees on its steep sides had lost their leaves, and through the evergreens could be seen brilliant splashes of sunshine on rocks and glossy trunks below. Far out beyond the last thick chestnut, smoked along the ground the dim and silvery green of the olives, and the air was so pure that Mariù saw the broken trailing branch of one that touched the ground. Oh! had Martello found what she had left the night before? She had heard a step near by her as she fled along the turf. Was it his, or a pursuer's?

It was both. One had seen her leave the food, and seen Martello take it away, but had not dared to follow him. But when, before daylight in the morning, creeping on his face across the mountain-top from the upper entrance to his casa, Martello had gone around the opposite side and set off on his way to Rome, quietly following him till they should be quite sure that he was alone, the old gentleman and his wife of the previous evening had requested the honor of his company, and taken him to Rome by a less laborious way than that he contemplated.

Rich rascals get along so much more easily than poor ones do. In the first place, they have more friends to help them; and in the second, they are better able to help themselves. If Martello had had a palace, for example, it is not probable that he would have been arrested simply for skulking, though he were known to be a matriculated villain. But the palaces were on the other side. It is true, he did try to escape, and drew a rather ugly-looking knife; but then he might have thought these men were brigands.

Finding escape impossible, he submitted sullenly, muttering a proverb as he walked off before his captors: "One has got to go when the devil is behind." But his mouth watered at sight of the two lovely revolvers pointed at him. Poor Martello had never owned a revolver; and these, as he said afterward with a look of pride and longing, when describing his capture to Renzo, were "certi rivolveri!" and for the first time Mariù's lover saw something like a smile on that dark face and heard a sigh from those stern lips.

To Martello's proverb one of the policemen responded with another, very good-naturedly uttered: "If you are not a wolf, you are a gray dog."

The other ten men made a clean silent circuit of the mountain, beginning in two parties at the side opposite the ravine. Two of them came up and passed by our little party on the Punto.

"See! there are some hunters!" Aurelia said as they approached, rifle in hand. And Robert, turning, bowed to them, and asked what luck they had had. They answered pleasantly, looked steadily at each one of the party, and passed on. Only Mariù's face they did not see.

"Oh, let me look a little, signorina!" she had said suddenly to Aurora, seeing her let the spy-glass she had been looking through

sink down at sound of steps approaching. And when the men paused, she was looking with all her eyes toward Sassovivo, the corners of her shawl hanging over her raised arms, and hiding her face. Looking toward Sassovivo; but her eyes saw only blackness, and her head went spinning round. Only her knees braced against the rock in front of her gave her feet a little steadiness. When she heard Aurelia call Aurora to come and eat some luncheon, she let the hands holding the glass fall. The men had disappeared, and Gian was coming toward her with a bottle of wine and some bread.

"Here is our part, Mariù," he said, and then stood staring at her. "Why, what is the matter? Your face is as white as a cloth."

"Hold your tongue!" she answered hastily. "If they know that I feel sick they will never let me go with them again. I don't want anything. Go away, and let me be quiet a little while."

If she did feel sick, she need not have been so cross, Gian thought, and went away in some displeasure to seat himself with his back to the sun and eat in solitary state.

And then Mariù heard a low whisper. It might have been a sound of wind in rock or tree, if there had been any wind. She held her breath and listened.

"Oh! there are a lot of men below!" Aurelia called out. "There are the hunters. What can they have found?"

Mariù glanced at them and saw that all three of the young people were leaning over the rock and looking down; and like a spirit in the air the whisper came again, and this time seemed to syllable her name.

"What can they be looking at?" said Aurora.

And then Gian got up, wiped his mouth on his sleeve, and crossed the road to see what was the matter. One of the men below had lighted a wax taper, and two others were lifting their rifles to take aim.

Then something caught the skirt of Mariù's gown and gave it a pull. It was enough. A girl of her experience knows that two and two make four. She sank down on her knees, and seemed to be looking over the rock.

- "What are they doing?" asked a voice.
- "Ten men are going into the cave with lights and rifles," she replied.
 - "Can I come out? Will any one see me?"

She looked round at her party. They were bending as far as possible over the rock, and there was no other person in sight.

"Come out quickly!" she whispered, and spread her full skirts widely to hide him if any one should chance to look. All her faintness was gone. Her cheeks glowed rosily, her head was up, and a strong fire of courage tingled along her nerves.

The bush was pushed aside, and Renzo's head appeared. He ranced about, and his eyes fell upon the beasts. "Take the horse," he said, "and when you have gone far enough, send him back on the road." And she stood up, and held her shawl spread out as if bout to fold it newly, hiding him while he rose.

He crossed the road lightly and quickly, and hid at the other side where it wound downward to a second turn. A minute later Mariù heard the sound of hoofs stepping softly and slowly, then more quickly; and then there was a faint, far-away galloping.

This had occupied but a few minutes, and all the time the others had been looking down the mountain with increasing excitement and smothered exclamations. Some of the men had gone into the cave, other wax tapers had been lighted, and the two with the rifles stood still all ready to fire.

"It must be some wild beast!" Aurelia said.

"No," Gian answered; "'tis the police after somebody."

Aurelia glanced behind her with alarm, and saw Mariù close by, between her and the road. "Oh, nobody will come here," the girl said with a confident cool air. "You see, those policemen have been all round this part. What are they doing now?" While speaking, she had kept her thick shoes tapping on the rock, that they might not hear that faint sound of hoofs.

All four of those who were looking over the rock cried out at once. For two men appeared, leading another man between them, who hung heavily upon their arms, his own arms raised before his face to shield it from the sun. And then there was a running to and fro, and a few minutes of excitement in the group, and presently they became still, and all looked upward.

"The man cannot walk! They want help,—some wine, or a donkey!" Aurelia said excitedly. "Go down directly, Gian. Take this bottle with you!"

And Gian, blind with excitement too, made a signal to the men, then went on to a place from which he could scramble down the rocks.

"They can have my donkey," Mariù said, and walked away a moment, and then came back.

"Signorina Aurora, your horse has got loose and gone grazing down the road," she said. "I'll go down and catch him. Don't you be afraid. He isn't lost."

"Yes, go," Aurora said, and leaned over the rock again to see Gian talking with the men, and the one who seemed their prisoner sitting on a stone with his face covered.

Robert remarked a little slightingly that it seemed to take a good many hunters to catch one rabbit.

"Perhaps he may be a person of importance," Aurelia said to him. Aurora drew back with a start, and stood a moment gazing breathlessly at a new wild thought which had sprung up in her mind at the remark. Then she bent down again, and looked at the man who sat turned away with his hands over his face.

Gian came up panting. "They want a donkey," he said. "I told them Mariù would lend them hers."

They all assailed him with questions; but Gian knew nothing. He took care, however, not to say so. Nodding his head, and dropping his eyes, he assumed a look of being determined not to reveal what he knew, though they should beat him with many stripes. "It doesn't do to talk too much abou certain things," he said.

"Go and take them the donkey at once," Aurelia commanded, in some displeasure at his reserve.

"Nonsense, dear!" whispered Aurora, laughing. "He knows no more than we do. He is never reserved till he has told everything he knows."

And then Gian discovered that the horse and Mariù were both missing.

"It is nothing, Gian," Aurora called out. "They will be back in a moment. Don't you trouble yourself about them. Mind your donkey. Can you lead him down where you went?"

It was a rough descent; but the sure-footed little creature went so carefully as to make long ears seem beautiful. One of the men below left his party to meet them, and made his compliments in such a

manner that Gian could not advance another step, but was forced to return.

"There's a party of English folks from Sassovivo up on the mountain," one of the men had said. "We can get a donkey from them."

"Don't let them see me!" cried out the man who sat shading his eyes from the sun. "Don't let them know who I am! Keep them away!"

So Gian went back as wise as he came.

If Mariù saw the horse grazing below when she declared she did, it must have been with her mind's eye; but it was there nevertheless. A mile of road between him and pursuit, Renzo had recollected that he was safer on foot, and, descending, and turning the creature's head the way he came, he gave the reeking flanks a blow that set the animal galloping back the same road. But the gallop soon became a trot, and the trot an amble, and then, with a backward glance that showed there was no stick behind, the horse set himself to nibbling some clover bunches that had escaped the autumn chills.

So Mariù, running with all the speed she could make, found him, and took her apron off to dry him, leading him slowly back. But, almost at the top, she drew him to the roadside, mounted, and whipped him to a gallop.

"How you have made him sweat!" Gian exclaimed. "Don't you know you ought not to make a beast gallop that way up hill?" and he began to rub the creature and lead him up and down in the sun. "But how he got loose puzzles me."

"That beast is like a Christian," said Mariù, standing with her arms akimbo, and her head on one side, contemplating the animal. "He knows how to unfasten any knot that you can tie."

The policemen had gone away with their man on the donkey. Robert made some sketches, and notes of color. The cloudless day declined toward a cloudless sunset,—"as bare as the altar at St. Peter's when they have the 'Forty Hours,'" Aurora said,—"all gold and fire."

The little party on the Punto mounted and rode downward with something of that feeling of contentment with which the birds may settle into their nests at night after a long flight. "The world is most beautiful!" Aurora said to herself. "And— I'm sure that it was

Don Leopoldo! And how glad the dear duke and duchess and mamma will be! And how horrible it is, too!"

Would they hear an explanation of the affair of the policemen and their prisoner in Sassovivo? they all asked, Gian being wild to know what it meant.

They did not hear a word. The men had scattered themselves like a mist. If any person in town had helped them, no word of gossip transpired. Mariù's donkey had been restored to his owner and paid for. It had been borrowed for one of a party of hunters who had sprained his ankle, it was said. And gradually the wonder died out.

"It is all nonsense!" said those who wished to keep the affair quiet.
"They were a few hunters, most likely."

You might guess at those who knew something of the business by noting who protested that there was no business at all.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A WEDDING.

THE few weeks before Aurelia's marriage passed like dew.

Every day came a few lines from Robert. Salathiel had come home and taken possession of his studio, and Robert had moved into his own unfinished place. Everything was chaos there as yet, but hints of a beautiful artistic order were beginning to glimmer out here and there, and the work was going on rapidly. He had set up a bed in one of the bare rooms, and lived there with only a chair and table, the richest man in Rome. The roof of his studio had been raised, and a stair went up to the top of it, where Aurelia should have her garden and not miss her terrace of Sassovivo. He had already got some boxes of violets ready to open their blue eyes with the first hint of spring, and there was a yellow and a white jasmine-tree. And could she procure some of those glorious purple flower-de-luce they had come upon in one of their walks, and which Aurora had said ought to be called flower of shadows? Let her tell Gian to get a box

and a spade and follow her out to the corner of a certain vigna without vines, where they had all torn themselves into strips getting through a brier hedge, and there dig up earefully that Egyptian beauty, and treasure it like a jewel till he could set it on their terrace opposite a box of yellow lilies.

Of course their housekeeping could not begin in this dearest of houses, which needed paint, plaster, and paper. Robert had learned the Italian rule for new houses,—"The first year for your enemy, the second year for your friend, and the third for yourself,"—and had added another clause, "the fourth year for the one dearer than yourself." But since this was not a new house, but only a house retouched here and there, they might change the years to months, and go into it in the fourth month. Meantime, he had found a cosey little furnished apartment and engaged it for three months. She had better take an Italian servant in Sassovivo, and they could have a man come in by day.

On reading the business portions of this letter to Glenlyon, he immediately suggested that Marin should go. To be sure, she was not much of a cook, but she could immediately put herself in training with Giovanna. Besides, her guardian added privately to Aurelia, the poor girl's lover would not, it appeared, visit her in Sassovivo, but might visit her in Rome; and who knew but Robert might make him useful in the studio, and the two be respectably married and become useful members of society? To be sure, the cause in which the fellow's face had been spoilt was little to his credit; but maybe the lesson would do him good. And, in any case, they could not let the girl break her heart.

When the proposal was made to Mariu, she accepted it joyfully, though she did not know where Renzo might be found. A week had passed since the ride to the Punto, and not only had she heard nothing from him, but they had received no explanation of the scene there witnessed.

Italy is the Paradise of people who have something to "hush up," if they have money or if they can make themselves feared. If it were for the interest of any person of influence to hush up an earthquake, doubtless a way would be found to do it, and there would be plenty of men and women to declare that they were never more comfortable

and stationary in their lives than at the very moment when a city might be disappearing into the earth before their eyes, and they themselves being tossed about till their teeth chattered. Earthquake? I don't feel any earthquake. You must be mistaken.

Aurora had written the story to her mother, and the countess had replied immediately, begging her to keep perfect silence on the subject. Don Leopoldo had returned from a short trip to Paris, she wrote, and was not well. He had taken a severe cold, and had a slow fever; but they hoped that he would soon be up. The Donna Clotilda had gone to a convent school, which left her free; but the duchess wished her to remain a little longer. Then, as that kindest and best of benefactors, the Signor Glenlyon, had cordially invited her, she should come and live with her dear Aurora, and they would try to repay him by making him as happy as their utmost devotion could do. She had seen the apartment where Robert and Aurelia would live immediately after their marriage, and found it very comfortable, and had gone to the other also, which she pronounced delightful. It had not seemed to her necessary to enter into details with the duchess, who would remain rather stiff about the Inglese until her son should be safely married, but had merely told her of the engagement and that the marriage would take place very soon.

The countess ended a long letter with a repetition of her charge to her daughter to maintain a perfect silence regarding the mountain adventure.

"I will not have it talked about!" Don Leopoldo had said passionately. "If it gets out, I will go back to Paris and stay there. They must let the man go. He isn't the one, I am sure. I won't say a word against him. The letter doesn't signify. I never wrote such a letter."

"But," he added, on second thought, "I want to see the man. Tell them I know the faces of the people who—of those infernal brigands, and can identify them. Let them see that he isn't armed, and then bring him here."

"Leopoldo has brought me the loveliest painted fan from Paris!" the duchess said to her friends. "Madame de Liminge chose it for him. He brought it as a peace-offering, for he had frightened me nearly to death by going off without a word. I trembled lest he should

marry that American girl after all,—you know she is not nearly so rich as we thought,—but he did not even see her. Isn't it a lovely fan? See those colors! Aren't they perfect?"

It was a hideous fan, painted with toadstools and a toad, which Don Leopoldo had indeed brought from Paris as a curiosity, and which his mother had screamed at sight of, declaring it would give her nightmare, and had tossed loathingly into a drawer, till the time arrived when it became useful; and, "Such a sweet toad!" her friends said, and asked no more of Don Leopoldo's vagaries.

And then one evening Martello was taken to the palace, and Don Leopoldo saw his face, and shuddered at it.

Martello was quite cool as he stood beside that luxurious bed, so different from the one he had been able to offer his guest, and seemed more interested in gazing about the chamber than in looking at the occupants. He had seen them before; but this was his first visit to a palace.

"Where is the other fellow?" asked Don Leopoldo, raising himself up, and motioning to Alfonso, his valet, who held a revolver out of sight.

"Other one?" echoed Martello, with an absolutely vacant air, dropping his black eyes on the speaker. He had been looking at the shower of roses and buds that seemed to hang suspended in the clear ceiling.

"Oh, that's right!" said Don Leopoldo mockingly, though he shrank a little. "Keep on talking just so; because, if you should happen to remember or understand anything, it might be troublesome for you, you know."

Martello uttered not a word, but continued to stare. He was merely holding his tongue and waiting to see what would happen; but he seemed to be meditating some awful deed.

"Well, haven't you anything to say if I let you go?" demanded the young man, growing nervous under that fixed gaze. "I want to know if you are going to forget this affair if I do."

"I have been in prison," Martello said gloomily; "and they have taken my knife.'

"So you have been wronged and robbed, you poor innocent!" said Don Leopoldo, moving his feverish head upon his pillows. "Make him restitution,—will you, papa?—and let him go."

The duke gave Martello a small roll of bills. "I counsel you to go a long way off," he said, looking at him attentively.

Martello counted the money and put it into his pocket, then turned away. He had not removed his hat, nor touched it.

The duchess stood near the door, her eyes on fire with rage. "But for the revolution, and these low democratic times," she said, "you should not go out of this house free and alive!"

He paused and looked at her with a strange, cold smile. He had seen these ladies all light laughter, and coolness, and silent pride. After all, they were only contadini varnished over. Then he went out.

The duchess struck her hand on the velvet chair-back near her. "What times are these, when we must let that brigand go?" she cried. "What is our rank worth, Marcantonio? My ancestors would have thrown him headlong from a tower!"

"Our ancestors, my dear, did some very queer things," the duke remarked.

Martello walked straight out through the palace, glancing about him, the servants all shrinking out of sight, knowing the truth, yet daring to hint it only in whispers. "Hushing up" does not hush whispers.

Yet, for all his dark face, his thoughts were not so dark as they might have been. He was thanking the Madonna that he had escaped the galleys, perhaps the hangman, and that he had some money in his pocket, enough, maybe, to buy one of those fascinating revolvers. And he was wondering if his house had been discovered, and if Renzo had escaped. And he was concluding that Renzo was a weak fool, to be sure, but that he was willing to keep him if he wanted to stay. The fellow amused him, kept the silence of the place from turning him to stone.

Reaching the caves that night, he found the low passage to the upper corridor closed. Renzo had closed it with earth and stones at the first alarm. He went round to the other entrance and called. No one answered. He entered, and found the cave just as he had left it, but his companion gone.

The two had a sign agreed upon to let the later comer know that the place was safe, if anything should happen. Martello went up and



• fastened a green leaf to the trunk of a tree. Then he redescended, and put up three fresh winter roses for La Speranza. He had taken them from Betta's garden as he came by. And he had given Betta some money, and bought some food.

Betta served him with perfect good-nature. "And where is Renzo?" she asked. "Mariù is anxious about him. She wants to see him about something particular."

"I don't know anything about Renzo," he answered, and told her nothing. But the next day, when Renzo, seeing the sign, came back to him, Martello mentioned slightingly, "The girl wants to see thee. I think she will come down to Betta's to-night."

"I wish I had killed him!" Renzo said, sitting helpless and half starved. "They were in before I knew."

"He will die," said Martello consolingly. "He has fever, and is as white as a sheet. Those fellows are worth nothing. They die like butterflies. You can't touch them but they are crushed."

There was indeed some danger of it. The shock Don Leopoldo had received, acting on a frame undermined by dissipation, had left him weak and feverish, and his mother had not been able to deny herself the pleasure of communicating to him the news of Aurelia's approaching marriage. He turned his face to the pillow without a word. He seemed to himself ruined.

But when another week had passed, the Countess Emilia wrote to Aurora that he seemed to be gathering strength, and that the duchess was arranging another marriage for him, with an Italian girl, which promised well, and that it was most probable that he would make no further trouble in following out the wishes of his family.

Letters were arriving at the castle in a white drift during these days. There were affectionate congratulations from all of Robert's family to both Aurelia and Glenlyon. They were delighted with the engagement, though the wedding seemed a rather shabby affair. The Countess of Earncliff insisted that they should come to England in May, if it were only for a month, when Aurelia should be presented. It was just as well that they should keep quiet and make no acquaintances before that time. Then, returning to Rome, Robert's wife could take her proper position. Moreover, Robert's aunt and cousin would be in Rome for a few weeks about Easter, and would not only go to

see Glenlyon, but could return to England in company with the young people.

The marriage was to be solemnized at the English Consulate in Rome on the 26th of December, and on Christmas afternoon the whole party were to leave Sassovivo. Glenlyon and Aurelia would go to a hotel; Aurora and Mariù and Jenny would take immediate possession of the furnished apartment, and do whatever they pleased there till, after the next day's wedding-breakfast, the keys would be resigned to the bride. Jenny would return with Glenlyon and Aurora to Sassovivo on the afternoon of the wedding. One servant would be enough for their small housekeeping, with a boy to come during the day and attend the door, and Jenny, who was to go to England with Aurelia, if she went in May, must meantime teach all her old master's ways to a new servant.

The evening before Christmas, Robert appeared at the castle. They had not been sure that he would come, and were rejoiced to see him. All was bright and gay in the little city, the churches ready for the festa, with all their finest crimson hangings up, and the altars crowded with unlighted candles; the shops were decorated with green wreaths, and even the poorest hoping for some unforeseen pleasure to overflow to them from the bounty of the rich. Glenlyon had given a hundred families enough money to buy them a passable dinner, and Aurelia and Aurora had distributed clothing to a score or two of children, both families and children having been recommended to them by Fra Antonio. Then, in the deep night, Glenlyon and Aurora went softly out of the house to Fra Antonio's church, which they found already full of people, and blazing with lights.

They had wished to make some offering to Fra Antonio himself; but all their research into his wishes had only enabled them to send a basket of the last mandarini on the trees, and a purse full of new paper *lire* with which he might make some poor souls happy for an hour.

It was already dawn when they returned to the castle, where all was still and every one asleep, and went to the drawing-room to warm themselves over the embers of the fire.

"I do wish that you would let me bring you something," Aurora said persuasively. "You must feel chilly. Only one little glass of wine!"

"No, child," Glenlyon answered. "I am satisfied. You may put the bottle of hot water into my bed, since you have prepared for it. Then go and get all the sleep you can. We have two busy days before us. Don't leave your chamber before ten o'clock. Robert and Aurelia can take their breakfast alone."

They did take it alone, Mariù explaining the reason to them.

"That girl will be a great comfort to my uncle," Robert said. "But for her, we really could not leave him."

"Yes," Aurelia replied; "and it is only since we came here that there was anything in his manner to remind me that he is half Italian by birth. His enthusiasm always seemed the Northern white heat, and in his ordinary manner he was as cool as the rest of us. But he looks at Aurora sometimes and smiles faintly, as if he were listening to a song he knew when he was a child; and he catches up, or falls in to, little Italian ways, as if they were old habits. Though I have been with him all my life, I feel that she is nearer to him, and more sympathy with him, than I."

Her soft eyes filled with tears, and a slight tremor caught her lip.

Their breakfast was over, and they were looking out of the drawingom windows over a sunny landscape while they talked.

The door opened, and Aurora's joyous face looked in with a bright Buona festa!" Then she entered, bearing a tray holding a delicate reakfast.

"He has rung for his coffee," she said. "And I thought that it would be so much pleasanter if, instead of Jenny going in, you two hould be his servants this morning. Am I right? And when you have given him your English greeting, then give him greeting in his nother's tongue. Say 'Buona festa!" Do you remember that the last Christmas he spent in that room, she must have said it to him?"

Robert took the tray, with a silent glance of admiration and respect at the speaker, and Aurelia followed him, holding out her hand to Aurora. But the Italian girl drew back.

"I will see him when he comes out," she said. "You two are all his."

Glenlyon sat before a small fire in his study, as they called this room. His back was turned to the door, and only his white hair showed over the carved top of the chair.

"Good-morning, Jenny!" he said somewhat feebly, without tuning. He was feeling tired after having been out at night.

The tray was set down at his elbow, and two bright voices wished him "Buona festa!" and Robert turned his chair, with him in it, to the table, and Aurelia poured out his coffee. A breeze of gladness seemed to have entered the room with them.

- "How good of you to come in!" Glenlyon said, brightening. "This is cheerful."
- "I knew that he would like it," Aurora whispered to herself as she heard his voice change its tone. And a moment later they heard her at the piano singing,—

"Cantet nunc is chorus angelorum,"

the

"Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo!"

making the chords ring again.

But when they came out she had disappeared. In all those last days she had left Aurelia as much as possible with her guardian, mindful that they were to part,—to meet again, it was true, but never to resume the old daily intimacy which had endured since that far-away day in a far-away desolate home when he had found the orphaned child weeping before an empty bed, and, gathering her into his arms, had gone with her in search of a father. She had found every sort of love under his protection, even the love which was to take her away from him, and nothing was now left to him but to go out alone in search of the Father of all.

He was cheerful. He looked at the happy side, and refused to dwell on the shadow which ever accompanies light. He had a smile for her when she stood by him with tears rising every moment into her eyes.

"Go and see what Aurora is about," he said. "I hear her in the dining-room."

Aurora was in the dining-room with Jenny and Mariù, preparing for their Christmas dinner, which to-day would be an hour only after noon, to enable them to set out for Rome soon after and arrive there at early dusk. The table was set, and the three stood looking at it. A great knot of wood smouldered in the fireplace, and through the sunless window came faintly the sound of a band playing in the piazza.

"Doesn't it look pretty, Mariù?" Jenny asked, glancing at the snowy fresh cloth, the bright dishes, and the great wreath of evergreen that hung from the ceiling-lamp over the table.

Mariù lifted her eyebrows, waited a minute, then gave a qualified assent.

"What would you do to it if it were your table?" Aurora asked.

Mariù melted a little toward a smile, her head bending as it always did when her heart was touched. She was happy to the ends of her apron-strings; for she had talked with Renzo at Betta's the evening before; and he had come up to one of the early masses of Fra Antonio, coming by starlight; and she had met him at the gate when the day was white in the east, and given him a Christmas dinner in a backet to carry back for him and Martello; and she had told him to ne quickly to Rome, for the young Englishman wanted him in his dio. Therefore her smile was at call.

"Oh, the table is clean," she said; "and, of course, voi altri si-

"No matter about noi altri signori," Aurora interrupted. "What you think would improve it? You know the Signor Glenlyon likes be ways of the country, and the Signor Roberto is delighted when he set them, and the signorina thinks them so pretty."

"But we poor people-" said Mariu, coquetting with her idea.

"Nonsense!" interrupted Aurora impatiently. "Do instantly what you are thinking about. It is the day of the poor and the simple, and of infants. Let us be children; n'est-ce pas, Aurelia?" she added to Aurelia, who had just appeared.

The end of the matter was that Mariù disappeared from the room, went down-stairs and out into the garden with a basket in her hand, which, after a rather long time, she brought into the dining-room again. She was looking perfectly serious, and resolute to face even ridicule or displeasure, since they had bidden her do so. Her basket was full of rose-petals, with a few orange- and lemon-blossoms she had found, and tiny sprigs of fragrant green, and leaves sparsely sprinkled of glossy imperial laurel, and as she came she was mingling them by raising a handful and letting it drop again.

Her step in crossing the room was the step of a contadina in thick shoes, but her fingers when she reached the table were the fingers of an artist and lighter than a lady's. With the care and delicacy of one who paints a picture of a beautiful face, she scattered the mingled odorous shower over the cloth, diapering, but not covering it, standing back from time to time to see the effect, her head aside, her mouth compressed, her brows slightly drawn with study. Then she selected an orange-bud and laid it on Aurelia's plate, a red rose-bud for Aurora's, a laurel-leaf for Robert's, and, after hesitating long, a curved white rose-petal for Glenlyon's. After looking and thinking a moment longer, she added a laurel-leaf to the rose-bud on Aurora's plate, then looked solemnly at the smiling spectators of her work. "What do you think of it?" she asked.

They all broke out in praises; at which Mariù hung her head with the shy, sweet smile of other days.

"It is our way," she said, in a deprecating way, and stepped back for Gian, who went consequentially to announce dinner to the only two who were not in the dining-room. But Mariù went no farther than the corridor, where she waited, peeping in, to see the effect of her decoration on the gentlemen; then, pleased and proud, descended to help Giovanna, who was in all her glory over a dinner for which she had been given carte blanche, but a little angry for the moment at the absence of her forces. She had employed two outside hungry women as special help for the occasion, and she declared that it would take two to watch that they put nothing into their mouths of what was to go up-stairs. Jenny and Mariù, appearing, were speedily reproved and set to work, and soon they were all laughing together.

"I have given them sardines, and ham, and olives," proclaimed Giovanna excitedly, striking her fist on the kitchen table with each word. "And I have given them a magnificent soup made of beef, and a chicken, and—" Here she interrupted herself to rescue a tipping saucepan, while her four assistants continued the pounding, scraping, or grating which they were severally performing under her orders. And so at every pause in her duties the canticle went on, enumerating the dishes which she had prepared, with the constant ritornella, "I have given them sardines, and ham, and olives."

"Mariù has given me a scallop-shell," Glenlyon said. "Does she mean that I am going to the Holy Land?" "She means that you have been a Crusader," Robert said hastily, seeing his uncle look serious for a moment.

It was dusk when they reached Rome that evening, and parted with but few words, to meet the next morning at the Consulate.

Everything had been perfectly arranged, and it seemed that no one but themselves knew what was going on, till, the marriage over, they all went back to the new apartment, where the countess and Salathiel had been all the morning and only slipped out unseen when the watchful Mariù saw the carriages stop. Then, while Robert was thinking that it was but a poor coming home for the bride of an earl's son, and Glenlyon was anxiously hoping that the hints he had received might not turn out delusive, the door opened on a fairy bower. There were flowers, and lights, and the tiniest of bright fires, and the broadest of bright sunshine.

No wedding-breakfast could have been prettier, or more gay, with every moment some little surprise for the bride. When she admired the tall vase, a mere bubble of Venetian glass, with large green leaves and a white lily in it, she was told that that was Jenny's offering. And when coffee was brought in, there was a coffee-set from Aurora's antique porcelain as her friend's gift.

"It is the first one I ever owned!" the bride said, holding up her empty cup, and seeing a long life of home and housekeeping in the bit of blue Japanese ware. And then she left her place and went round the table to kiss Aurora on both cheeks.

After which appeared a piece of beautiful old Venetian lace from the countess, with a charming note on coroneted paper, and a slip of sandal-wood for perfume in the lace.

And at last, when they were about to leave the table, Glenlyon drew a morocco case from his pocket, and, opening it, set it before his ward. A string of large pearls, chosen with costly care, lay on the velvet cushion.

Aurelia gave them one glance, then threw herself on Glenlyon's neck. "You are all too good to me!" she exclaimed.

"You married in haste to please Robert and me," Glenlyon said, as they all rose. "You sweetly resigned much that women innocently like. These pearls are in memory of that."

Robert looked at his bride somewhat anxiously as he waited for her

answer. She smiled at him. "I had forgotten that I married so soon to please others," she said, blushing. "I find that is the best way to please myself."

The last present, Robert's, and the most precious, confronted them when they returned to the drawing-room. It was a portrait of Glenlyon. Even he had not seen it, though he had given two or three sittings and knew what they were for. He stood and looked at the picture now, remembering that time, less than a year before, when, in his London home, startled by the new thought that his life was almost ended, he had stood and seen his pale reflection in the mirror. This was the same—yet not the same—face he had seen in those London shadows—

It was a masterly portrait. The grand head was there, without a change or any weakening prettinesses; but dimly seen behind it were deep shadowy mountains, peak on peak piled more than half-way up the canvas; and above their floating outlines, where the head showed, was a hint of dawn round the white hair; and the clear light in his eyes and on his brow seemed like the outshining of the soul that saw the sun while yet, the earth was unaware of it.

Robert's best praise was in their silence, and, after, in Glenlyon's arm around his shoulders, and in the momentary mingling of the white hair with the brown.

They set out early to return to Sassovivo, and left the bride and bridegroom in their home.

- "You are content, then, with your simple wedding, dear?" Glenlyon asked.
- "It could not have been more beautiful," Aurelia answered. "It is all love."

Her guardian took her by the hand, and gave her to her husband. "May God so deal with you as you with her!" he said, and turned hastily away.

The two girls embraced each other silently and closely, their sweet, fresh faces pressed together for a moment. Then Aurora ran downstairs, and pulled her veil down as she stepped into the carriage. Jenny lingered last, and tried to take leave of her dear young mistress with a smiling face; while Mariù went to the very street to kiss once more the hands of Glenlyon and Aurora.

And then they turned the leaf, and all prepared for a new chapter.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SEPARATE PATHS.

THEY settled into their quiet country life again. The countess would come to them in a few weeks, and meantime Aurora took her exercise on the terrace or in the gardens, and never went out except when she went to mass with Glenlyon, always at Fra Antonio's church. It seemed to him that he could never again enter the cathedral. He heard rumors of Father Segneri, but nothing directly from him, and only knew that he was living quietly and alone at the top of a house in Naples.

Frequent happy letters came from the young couple, who had definitely promised to go to England for the month of May, but would Pend the summer "foraging," as Robert called it, in Italy,—foraging for his art, he meant.

And then the Countess Emilia came to what was to be her own home, full of trembling joy and gratitude. She brought messages from Robert and Aurelia, and news from the ducal family. Don Leopoldo had reconciled himself to the new engagement, and the marriage would take place about Easter.

"At present the duchess ignores the fact that she has ever known a person who is now called Aurelia McLellan," Aurora's mother said to her. "One cannot wonder at it. But when Don Leopoldo is safely married, and they are all in Rome another winter, I think she will be very kind to the Signor Glenlyon's ward."

The countess arrived on the first of February, when spring was already stirring in the earth. The mother and daughter took long delicious walks together at those hours when they knew that Glenlyon liked to be alone. They found the first blue violets on sunny banks, and larch-tassels of rich brown and gold. Sometimes the elder songbird pushed the younger off the timid silence to which she clung, doubting her own power, and tried to make her sing. For Aurora owned now that the song was in her. She felt the second life live all about her, some one in the shadow, something in the light, a step in

the dry leaves, a whisper in the wind, and a whole suffocating fulness of thought and feeling seeking utterance and finding none.

"She did not love him, as I was afraid," her mother thought. "She knew him only long enough to make him seem a lovely dream she had one night."

On one of these spring days a letter came to Glenlyon from America. He opened, wondering, and saw the name of Teresa Melville at the She wrote to tell him of her engagement. "You see, I lost no time," she wrote. "And, in fact, there was no time to lose, for Mr. Edward Lindsay would not wait for any nonsense, and I was mortally afraid of losing him. He came across the ocean with me from England, and we made each other's acquaintance in the midst of the equinoctial, and fogs, and terrors of the deep, which may account a little for the haste with which my new career has been opened. No matter how he looks. He pleases me. But what he is is a serious matter. He is in the war-path of our politics, but does not live for office, nor long for it except to do his country good. He will buy no votes, and promises no offices. He is ridiculously low down in office, not yet a senator,—and more than ridiculously poor. He has a common farm, and his old father lives there. It is all they have. Edward worked himself through college, and used to sit up at night in his cold chamber studying, with mittens and overcoat on, while Don Leopoldo was looking at dancing-girls through an opera-glass. He saved up money and spent three months in Europe, seeing more than most travellers see in three years. He took ten Italian lessons in ten evenings in Florence, and the same of French in Paris, having studied both at home. He is ambitious, nobly so, and strong, and one day the world will hear of him. I want it to. It hears enough of his inferiors. Well, two weeks of stormy sea made us almost lovers. He told me all his story, and at last, speaking low and calling me Teresa, all his aspirations. I told him something, all that I hoped in a general way, but made no talk of dukes and duchesses, or of money. I didn't go to sea in purple and fine linen, and he took my maid to be Then we reached the Western shore, and said good-by for twenty-four hours, after which he was to come to my hotel to see

"I was worth seeing, dressed early for the opera, sitting under a

flaming chandelier, and attended by a man all buttons and low bows, as I was all laces and brocades.

"His face was awful. I saw his eyes astonished when he entered, and I laughed. He came half-way across the room, and stood transfixed. I only sat and laughed,—with joy and love, I do declare; but he thought it was mocking. 'It was like one of Circe's nymphs to so deceive me!' he said scornfully, and turned to go. I could not help it—I almost fainted, and he had to come back. No matter for the scene which followed. I had hard work to convince him, and I am a fraid that I spoke a little more contemptuously of my money than in a cooler moment I should feel. So at last he reconciled himself to take a bride who will come to him, like Achsah to Othniel (you said that!), with a 'dower of south lands and springs of water,' and, what is worse, who has been one of Circe's nymphs, as he calls fashionable women."

It was a long letter, and contained a request. Miss Melville wanted two Italian servants, who might be man and wife, plain, strong country-people, who would not disconcert the Lindsay father and farm-people when she should take them there. She wanted some one to whom she could speak that sweet language and so keep her husband along in it at the same time. "I thought of that mountain-girl who lives with you, and of her lover," she concluded, "if you would spare her, and if she would come."

And so a new flight for Mariù was arranged, and, after much talk and many letters, it was settled that she and Renzo should marry and go as far as England with those already going there in May, and be sent on to America with friends of theirs crossing in June. Mariù consented, for the sake of taking her ragazzo out of all old associations.

Just before Easter, Mrs. Kinlock, Glenlyon's step-sister, came out to Sassovivo for a few days, and Robert and Aurelia would come to say good-by before accompanying her to England.

The three incongruous ladies lived in the greatest apparent harmony; but the countess was glad to think that politeness required her to leave the relatives to talk over family affairs by themselves. She felt something of criticism in the atmosphere to which Aurora's inexperience was insensible.

"Robert told me to come out here and see a girl who has a star on

her shoulders for a head," his aunt said to her brother. "She is beautiful and brilliant, certainly; but I prefer Aurelia. She has more balance."

"There's the balance of a bird and the balance of a sensible girl," Glenlyon said. "Aurora has both; and both together make the balance of an angel, I should say. I hardly like that way of judging people, sister. Nothing is better balanced than a four-legged stool. Two of the wisest and greatest of rulers, David in Israel and Joseph in Egypt, were both sneered at in their youth as ill-balanced, because they had winged natures. Aurelia is a sweet, noble woman; so is this Italian girl, and she is a poet besides."

"He was always a little exalté, poor dear Glenlyon!" the lady sighed to herself when she was alone. People who never exalt themselves always pronounce the word exalté with a patronizing, pitying air.

Then Robert and Aurelia came to spend Easter, bringing Mariù with them, and the castle became very gay for a while.

Glenlyon was more active and cheerful than any one of them had ever seen him. He entered with almost womanly interest into all Aurelia's pleasant anticipations of her first brief London season, and was never tired of observing how happy the young couple were. He went out a good deal, and he invited some of the town's-people to dinner. "At least, Aurelia has not been a failure," he thought.

For every other thing that he had done in all his life now seemed to him a failure.

"This life agrees with my brother," Mrs. Kinlock said to the countess. "He is looking very well, and is more cheerful than I have seen him for many years."

"A great part of his cheerfulness comes from seeing how happy Mrs. McLellan is, and from having his friends about him," the Italian replied gently. "And besides, you know, signora, this is his native air."

Mrs. Kinlock was only half pleased at being reminded of the fact. "I think his simple mode of life, with the country air, agrees with him," she said. "The thing I chiefly admire in your country life is its wholesome simplicity. The world is killing itself, body and soul, with luxury. Your cooking is also very good," she concluded rather patronizingly.

But it was not thanks to Italian cooking that Mrs. Kinlock had had her virtuous English roast joint. The result had been brought about in a very serious manner. Glenlyon had held more than one private council with the cook and Jenny on the subject, the cook insisting that he had only to say two words and she should know just what to do, and very haughtily scouting the idea that Jenny should watch the Jenny, on her side, privately agreed with her master that the precise instant at which a large joint of beef or mutton is done could not be known by the intuition of an Italian country cook. Diplomacy was required not to provoke a general war in the kitchen, and firmness was necessary in order to procure a proper supply for the parlor; and perhaps Glenlyon's cheerfulness was more owing to the success which had crowned his efforts in the culinary line than to any other As ignorant as a toothless babe of the processes by which animals and plants arrive at being pleasant food for human consumption, he yet haunted the kitchen with a helpless anxious look which was pitiful to see, and which made Giovanna grind her teeth with rage even while she was smiling at him. After a day or two he did not dare to say "joint" to her, but he looked it, and she knew he thought - it. "What else should bring him poking about the kitchen?" she demanded of Gian. "A gentleman in the kitchen!" sneered Giovanna. " Mi da proprio schiffo!"

But, as meek as the Moses for whom the duchess had named him, Glenlyon continued to come. His tall head might be seen stooping a little to enter the gloomy door-way, and his white hair and beard glimmering ghostly in the shadows, while he advanced slowly and with a hesitating step toward the fire, catching a rosy glow over his stately front.

Whereupon Giovanna would make up to him with a waspish cordiality and a profusion of stinging compliments, asking what he would be pleased to command, accusing herself and all the household of the most beastly stupidity in not having heard him ring the bell and thus forcing a signore like him to the outrage of having to come to the very kitchen itself to give his orders.

"I only came in to ask if you think the spit you use would do," Glenlyon said humbly. "You know, it must not be run through the middle of the joint. I never saw in England that large hole through

the fowl or the roast of any kind. For myself I would not mind—"

"Oh, leave all that to me," interrupted the cook, tossing her head. "What do signori know about such things?"

And, to do her justice, Giovanna herself scarcely slept at night till the success of that first dinner was assured. She worked herself into a fever. She had slyly abstracted an English cook-book from her master's book-case, and, unwilling to ask Jenny's help, had gone to the professor of languages in the seminary, an excellent and dignified old canonico, who had very good-naturedly searched out "roast-beef" in the index and carefully and laboriously impressed an Italian version of the recipe on Giovanna's memory.

"Nothing could be easier," Giovanna declared, when it was all over.

"They had only to tell me in two words what was wanted, and I just tossed it up without thinking."

Mariù had been sad at the thought of leaving her beautiful country to go to an unknown land, where the language is harsh, where the snow falls in drifts, and to reach which she must pass ten days and nights on a heaving world of waters in a machine that groans at every forward step. But a piece of news told her by Betta made her now anxious to be off. Martello had been arrested again, and was in prison, with a fine prospect of the galleys. To be sure, the accusation was a new one; but that made no difference. He might tell of Renzo.

He did not tell. He had wounded more than one man when in anger, had killed one in a cane-brake duel, had stolen when he was in need; but he was pure savage. He had none of the civilized vices. When taken, he made no useless resistance, but went to prison with all the dignity of a prisoner of war, and, later, received his sentence of six months in the galleys without a sign of emotion. He was sentenced as an old offender.

But long before his trial came on, the party at the castle had broken up, and Renzo and his wife were on their way to America.

CHAPTER XXX.

A BUGLE-SONG.

THEY were alone again in the midst of the wonderful spring weather, with its languor, its loveliness, and its inextinguishable hope. The campagna was inundated with waving green, and when black clouds showed themselves above the mountain-tops the contadini gazed at them as if they were demons. If they came up the sky, the bells of the town rang for the people to pray that their harvests might be spared, and, when she heard them, every housewife took her right hand from the flour she was kneading into bread, or the chicken she was plucking, or the stocking she was darning, to sign herself with the cross, and say an Ave Maria, as she went on with her work.

In one of those days a newspaper came from Turin directed in an unknown hand to Aurora. She opened it, and saw a description of a fashionable marriage,—" Colonel Roberto d'Rubiera," with an infinite addition of titles of honor, to the "Signora Laura Cagliari," with another flourish of trumpets over the unspeakable distinction of her ancestry, and of her former husband's ancestry, and of her beauty, and her toilet, and her undoubted prospects of felicity with her present thrice happy and fortunate spouse. All which meant that the Piedmontese colonel had kept his promise, and married the beautiful widow who had assured him that she should die if he did not; and, we make haste to add, the fashionable wedding and the flourishing announcement of it were entirely the bride's doing, to which the bridegroom submitted.

"I suppose there must be some innate propriety in it," he said to himself. "I recollect that, in the olden time, when they sacrificed a beast they always gilded his horns."

Aurora's mother found her dreaming quietly over this notice.

"Colonel d'Rubiera is married, mamma," she said, and gave her the paper, then sat looking steadily out toward the southwest, where a blackness as of Erebus was coming up against the smiling spring landscape.

The countess was silent. She took a long time to read the notice,—or to seem to read it, for she was in reality observing her daughter's countenance. The fully-opened lustrous eyes were fixed on the advancing cloud, the lips were firmly closed, there was something rapt and raised in her look. The thought crossed her mother's mind that the girl's look was holy.

"They seem to have had a very beautiful wedding," the countess said hesitatingly.

Aurora uttered an absent, low-voiced assent.

"Well," said her mother, becoming a little nervous, "I hope they may be very happy."

"Yes," repeated the girl in the same tone.

Her mother waited a few minutes longer, then rose: "We should go to the drawing-room, my dear. The Signor Glenlyon has had his repose, and will be quite alone."

Aurora broke away from her revery, and rose at once. "We must not let him feel lonely one moment," she said, and hastened toward the door.

And here the countess made a mistake, her motherly anxiety confusing that delicacy which she seldom lacked. Or perhaps she was providentially allowed to make a small mistake now which would prevent her making a greater one hereafter.

"One moment, dear," she said, and caught Aurora by a floating fringed end of a gauzy scarf.

Aurora turned and smiled.

"Everybody is marrying, you see," the mother said; "and why not you? The duchess says—"

Here her voice failed; for the haughty, austere young virgin standing there before her was no more her sweet and smiling daughter. If she had proposed marriage to some priestess of Diana, she could hardly have been met with such a crushing weight of lofty cool surprise,—a coolness, moreover, which threatened to become a flame.

"I thought, mamma, that you understood I do not mean to marry," the girl said, with a commanding, steady gaze before which her mother's eyes fell. "Please do not speak of it again."

"It shall be as you wish, dear," the countess answered, and hastened out of the room to hide the tears she could not suppress.

The change had come! They were two women now, dear to each other, inexpressibly dear, but her child's heart was no more a simple primer for her eyes to read from the first page to finis. And, more, if they were still to continue dear, or friends, or even live in peace, no curiosity, even of thought, must creep with prying eyes over the barriers a word or glance might set up. It was hard; but it was inevitable; and the mother had the wisdom to submit, and to understand that unwelcome solicitation, vulgar prudential arguments, and even a mother's inquisition, would be an insult to the lofty virginal silence of her daughter's soul. Aurora was no common girl, ready to give herself for the mere sake of house, or lands, or name, or for the fleeting delight of some man who would seek her for her beauty, and who would think her glory faded when that was gone, too gross to see the fair sweet virtues that had ripened when her roses fled, and all the sublime sorrow of her martyred tenderness of wife and mother.

Without vanity, but from the strong pressure of her every instinct and intuition, she held herself to be more than house, or lands, or name, too high for a caprice, and consecrated to some noble work and holy passion yet to be revealed.

Glenlyon was already in the drawing-room, having just risen from the sofa, where he had taken the habit of lying down every day after luncheon. He was growing somewhat feeble, and went about but little now, scarce stirring outside the gates except to go to church. And these women, he often said to himself, were the best company he could have had. They helped him often, and, what was almost better, they never hindered him. For a thwarting friend is often more troublesome than a foe.

Engrossed in study of those ever-living truths which still stand green amid the snows of age and in the frozen polar ring of death, unblanched by the electric breath of passing souls or strange visionary auroras circling round that icy mystery beneath the dim funereal torch of the North Star of life, his mind was never shocked by being pelted with the faded weeds of earth. The care of everything about the house they took upon themselves, and they were gay or serious as they saw he chose. Their merriment was sweet and sparkling, and their seriousness answered his in its own tone, as an echo answers a voice.

"Signore, do you see a tempest coming?" asked Aurora. "All

the bells are ringing. It is hail, for it falls white, not gray, like rain."

"Let us pray for the harvests," said Glenlyon; and there was a momentary silence, each reminding Him who keeps "the treasures of the hail" that the bread of the poor was in the path of its crushing footsteps. For there is food for the rich garnered all over the earth against years of famine; but the bread of the poor man grows where it can hear him sighing when the day breaks.

Then the countess seated herself by Glenlyon, and Aurora stepped into a loggia, and looked at the sky.

"Tell us what you see," Glenlyon said to her, dropping his forehead on his hand. He seemed to be always weary in those days.

"The farther mountains are blotted out," she said. "There is no west nor southwest but a blackness, and the sun is as blind as Samson or Homer. There is both rain and hail. I see the different colors of them coming down. They stand like pillars holding the cloud up. There are lightnings, red ones and silver. Sometimes they spring all together from a centre, like serpents from a nest, and go all ways: sometimes one runs crinkling through the showers down to the earth. There drops a red flash through the gray rain! Gesù! Maria! one could not say Gesù! so quickly as it goes. A sigh is ten times slower. Toward the south there is one shower shaped like a globe. It is a whole cloud falling from the others. Now one pole touches the earth, the other the sky. It sinks slowly, growing wider where it touches. When the rain above us is like a crescendo in music, it must be a globe like this. One could make a picture of a shower only by listening how it sounds."

"Do they come this way?" Glenlyon asked. "I hear no thunder."

"The centre seems to steer another way, but the storm will touch us," she replied. "It has reached the plain. The corn-fields at the other side and all the wheat are lost to sight. The Badia is blotted out. There are pallid shapes, like ghosts, underneath the darkness. They fly low down, with long fluttering garments. They are graceful and terrible. Now the duke's olive-trees grow dim at the farther edge. I feel a puff of wind; and now all the trees begin to bend this way."

A low rumble of continuous thunder ran through all her words;

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and as she ceased speaking, the wind snatched the gauze scarf she had laid over her head, and carried it aloft.

Aurora had turned to enter the drawing-room; but when her hand failed to catch the flying scarf, she stopped and looked after it. It went northward over the castle, then eastward above the town, where, turning back, it floated westward so far over the olives that it showed only a gray speck in the gray air. In whatever direction it flew, Aurora did not remove her eyes from it, turning as it turned, and gazing steadily, till at last it came floating backward, with many a capricious to and fro, hung far above the castle, and began to flutter and to settle downward, lower every moment, in spite of the strong, increasing wind, till it settled on Aurora's hand, held up to take it.

She came in and shut the window as large drops began to fall.

"Where did your scarf blow to?" her mother asked, astonished. "I saw it go, and thought that it was lost."

"It has travelled east and west more than a mile, I think," Aurora said. "I do not understand. It seems as though a will were in it, or a power to know my will and to come back."

"What can you mean?" exclaimed the countess.

"That is what I do not know, mamma." Aurora smiled. "Once before I lost my veil. It was in Rome, on a windy, sunny day without a cloud. The wind snatched the veil off my bonnet and carried it away, the length of the whole street, and over the roofs. I stopped and looked at it, and knew that it would come back; and it came. More than fifty persons saw it, for they too stopped to look. It came and dropped into my very hand, and I had not moved a step, nor looked away from it. I sometimes think, mamma, that the elements are courteous to us when we give them our respect and good word."

The countess looked at Glenlyon with a smile, but said nothing.

"Has mamma told you that Colonel d'Rubiera is married?" asked Aurora, also turning to him. "Some one has sent me a paper. I think it may be he. He told me that he should marry this spring. You remember how he saved me on that fallen terrace. There was something heroic in all the air about him. Of course he has married a very lovely, perfect woman. A common woman would not dare to marry him."

"He was a very noble looking soldier," said Glenlyon. "He im-

pressed me pleasantly, and more than pleasantly. Besides, he made you sing. I think he was the first who made you break your tuneful silence." And he smiled, and glanced at the piano, remembering that scene.

The next morning, when the mother and daughter met, Aurora produced a folded paper. "The soldier has made me sing again," she said smilingly. "I remembered last night something he said to me, and it would not let me sleep till I had written this. Then I slept like a baby in a cradle. Don't be partial, mamma. Think of all the faults that the coldest critic could find, and tell me of them."

She had remembered, had never forgotten, the "never take a lower place than God has meant you for," of Colonel d'Rubiera, and in the restless, sleepless night had made it the *ritornella* of a poem of such noble, fiery beauty that the countess was electrified on reading it.

"You have far surpassed your mother, child," she said, kissing her. "I am proud of you!"

"Truly, mamma?" The girl breathed quick with pleasure. "And do you think that I might send it to him for a wedding greeting? It was for that I wrote it."

"I will see to it myself," her mother answered. "Leave it to me." In a little more than a week the poem came back to the castle, printed, with praises, in the first magazine of Italy, and with the signature "Aurora."

"Now you shall yourself direct it to him," the countess said, refolding the pamphlet.

"Thank God she is so frank and unconscious about him!" she thought, as Aurora wrote his name with smiling care in those delicate Italian characters learned from their perfect manuscripts. She had not liked the fashionable, mannish mode of the large, loose-jointed English penmanship.

Then she began to count the hours before her message would arrive at Turin: "First, Florence, loved of the arts and the stars, will feel you blowing through it, little bugle-song; then Bologna, where the women were so learned they would not stoop to sing, will hear you rustle like a dry leaf; then Milan, with its white marble sculptured forest of a Duomo; and last will come Turin, with the ethereal Alps, and him for whom you are. Will he recognize, and understand?"

He recognized, and understood. The poem, with a dozen papers and letters, found him in a perfumed little sala with a fair, teasing woman, who was annoyed when they were brought in, and pulled them coquettishly away when he tried to read. Her dress was like her beauty, rich and seducing, all laces and gold threads, and not too much of modesty. She was the bride of a month, and dressed for the theatre, without her gloves.

"Those stupid papers!" she exclaimed, hanging on his shoulder. "What have you to do with them when I am here? Lay them down, and look at me!"

"You dazzle me!" he said, and laid the papers down. "Must I say again that you are lovely?"

"Yes; and yet again! I never tire of hearing you. But why are you so grave? I will not have it so. See! here is a glass of wine to make you merry."

"I will not drink it," said the soldier, putting her gently back. "Go for your fan and cloak now, and tell your maid to wipe that red off your cheeks. I like your fresh, cream-colored whiteness best. 'Tis a rich tint. Go, now, or we shall miss Salvini's first word in Othello. You know I do not like to lose any word of his."

"Oh! the play of jealousy!" she said, and laughed. "Some day, Roberto, I mean to make you jealous. Then see how you will act Othello."

Colonel d'Rubiera took both his wife's arms strongly in his strong hands, but if his look meant menace or supplication it would have been hard to tell. Perhaps it was both. "Lauretta," he said, "let us be careful of each other! Let us not make a jest of jealousy!"

She broke from him, laughing, showing the red marks of his fingers on her soft white arms. "We shall see, Othello! we shall see!" she said.

"My God!" the soldier muttered, with a look almost of loathing, as he turned away from her; and then, alone, he read the poem signed "Aurora," trembling from head to foot. As he read, up floated her bright face and earnest eyes, and her soft voice spoke, and he kissed the paper with an agonized sense of loss and longing. "I must see her!" he thought; and, as his mind conceived the wish, his glance fell on the words,—

He laid the pamphlet down, sat one moment in bitter thought, then used his head back. "Su, Rubiera! su!" he said, and rose to meet is wife.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PERSECUTION.

It was the day before Ascension Thursday, which came late that year.

In the morning Glenlyon received a letter from Aurelia, who was delighted with her brief London season, and, at the same time, eager to begin her housekeeping in Rome. They would set out on their journey in a week, remain in Rome as late in the summer as they could, then travel for two months in the eastern part of Italy, from Venice to Ancona, visiting Sassovivo on their way back.

The letter contained a telegram from Miss Melville to Aurelia: "The children have arrived safe and happy."

It pleased Glenlyon that she had called Mariù and her husband "children."

Don Leopoldo was married to his beautiful Italian, and, so his mother wrote the countess, seemed to be very much in love with her. "After all his fancies," the duchess wrote, "it appears that he has at last found a wife calculated to make him happy and to keep him faithful." And, indeed, in a subdued, surprised sort of way, the marquis did seem to think that he was not, perhaps, so utterly ruined as he had at first imagined.

Gian and Giovanna, alarmed for their places, had won from the countess a promise that she would keep them when she should become mistress of the castle; though she reproved them for calculating on the death of so good a master, and declared that she hoped Glenlyon might live to be a hundred years old.

In honor of this grazia, which she believed to be due to a special interposition of the Madonna, Giovanna made auto-da-fé of the Bible that Aurelia had given her, poking it well into the coals, with none but Gian to see. She acted on the counsel of her confessor; and the fact that it was a Douai Bible may or may not have been known to him.

Another notice had reached Glenlyon, which went far toward destroying his pleasure in the first, and left a thorn in his heart such as he had never before felt the sting of.

Father Segneri had published a book concerning Italy and the Church, weaving into it his own defence, and the work had been condemned and placed on the list of the prohibited by the Congregation of the Index.

There was not a word of heresy in it,—they had not dared to say that there was,—but the strong, outraged spirit of the man showed itself in a truth-telling which had little of the more or less sincere obsequiousness with which his adversaries expect to be treated even by those whom they insult. He had not stooped to baser facts; but he had not scrupled to intimate how far from being of any uncommon personal worth were those who condemned him, or to assert that, though it takes very little wisdom to govern the world, they had not possessed enough to govern well, even for their own interests, that part of the world over which they had had power.

If these men had but known how little real respect and confidence underlies the greater part of the compliments they receive, and how some of their most intimate associates and best flatterers whisper and nod about them tête-à-tête; if they had but known that the class which trusts them least is the class which knows them best, and that many who seem eager to win their friendship are only seeking to avoid their enmity; if they had known that even sincere and intelligent friendship has its melancholy moments of invincible distrust,—they might, perhaps, have thought it wiser not to take so high a stand about their torn phylacteries. But priests and monarchs seldom hear the truth of themselves. It is their misfortune. Sometimes it is their fault.

If Father Segneri had been Protestant, they could have laughed at him. Had any error of faith been found in his book, it would have destroyed its effect. Had he been younger, they could have slandered him more crushingly. Had he been unknown, they could have treated him with contempt. But he was orthodox, eminent, and of a venerable age. He was an authority.

Of course they slandered him. It must have been observed how invariably the person who disapproves of these people, even when the criticism is not a personal one, is found to have some serious moral defect, if indeed he escape being denounced as the vilest of the vile. The fouler the slander the better it suits their purpose. their wisdom, as well as the baseness of their minds, is evident. they can make an opponent despised, no one will listen to him, though he speak with the tongue of a god and truth shine luminous in all his words. Moreover, they can thereby hide from a very gullible public the awkward fact that the arguments brought against them have not been answered, and are, probably, unanswerable. Their so-called religious papers are particularly courageous in this sort of warfare. aside for the nonce in their zeal those decencies which are demanded from less holy members of the press, they will print, side by side with praises of the Immaculate and definitions of the will of the Most Holy, such charges and insinuations as they doubtless hope the younger of their readers may not understand.

Such slanders as these Father Segneri probably escaped, thanks to his gray hairs; but he escaped no insolence.

To place the name of a book in the Index means, of course, that Catholics the world over are forbidden to read it. (It would be interesting to know if the decision against Galileo was ever formally rescinded. If not, the same penalties still threaten Catholics who believe that the earth revolves around the sun which now again threaten the Catholic readers of "La Nuova Italia ed i vecchi Zelanti.")

Father Segneri did as he had declared to Glenlyon he would do: he submitted to the decision of the ecclesiastical tribunal, and repudiated his book, with doubtless a mental reservation. But the respect in which Italy holds this tribunal was proved by the fact that the sale of the book increased after the prohibition. The author then retired to his solitary life in Naples, and let them fire their arrows at him. It would have been vain for him to seek a more peaceful asylum in Italy. He would have been met everywhere as he was met in Sassovivo, but would scarcely have found anywhere else the kindness and

respect which had there consoled him. And he was at once too old and too poor to seek an asylum in another country, as a brother priest had done but a few years before.

Father Giocchino Ventura, a monk and the superior of a Roman community, a preacher of note, he also had dared to advocate a revival of faith and morals in Rome, and had been driven out as by a nest of vipers. He went to France, and died there, after having written books which discover the story of his vain hopes. His "Donna Cristiana" and "Donna Cattolica" show that he hoped to excite in women, and especially in nuns, a holy enthusiasm of virtue by telling them what glorious work the women of the early Church did, disputing with and converting pagans and heretics, preserving the works of the fathers of the Church by copying them, and preserving their characters and reputations by a jealous prudence of conduct.

Vain hope! He merely added to the enmity of the clergy the enmity of the women.

When he was dead, they brought his ashes back with hypocritical honors, and laid them under the pavement of the church from which he had been driven out, and built a fine monument beside the altar where he now stands preaching in marble; and they put his books in their libraries, and quote from them with effrontery, claiming his virtues as their own.

Father Ventura had fled from their persecution; Father Segneri was obliged, or he chose, to stay and face it.

In the Catholic body the world over there is a perfect identity of belief in all that has been solemnly defined as of faith, and a similarity of customs, by which each member finds a home for his devotions, at least, wherever he may go. We understand each other's mode of speech; no other can so imitate it as not to be detected, ignorance as well as learning having its Catholic stamp; we utter the same religious phrases, which equally express us all, we weep the same heavenly sorrows, and rejoice in the same heavenly joys. Our souls, when they hunger, gather about the same table, where there is milk for babes, strong meat for men, and food for angels. No one with us is so simple but he finds delight; no one so grand but he finds a grandeur which passes his comprehension. The charity of our faith is an encircling chain of gold, often dropped out of sight beneath the tide of worldly

interests and differences, but brightening like the same chain lifted from dark waters with any general peril or surpassing joy.

This is divine. This is the earthly glory of the Mystical Spouse. This is Mother Church.

But, as some one has said, the devil is God's ape, and he too has forged a chain, and twined its iron links within the golden ones so closely that the human mind looks with despair to see how they can be disentangled. It is not mere individual weakness, or evil, which is inseparable from human affairs: it is authoritative, systematized evil: it is the serpent coiled about the tree of life: it is Antichrist with his hand at the throat of Christ!

Christ made his priesthood the servants of the world, knowing that in that noble servitude they would find a more glorious preeminence than any earthly power could give them, knowing, too, that a temporal glory would destroy the spiritual. With the holy pride of a God, he would have been ashamed to see his chosen spiritual princes chasing after the same vanities which the children of the flesh chase after.

But "Ye shall not surely die," whispers the tempter, and inspires in them the pride of mastership in all things, the power of gold and of the sword, the right of the spy, and of being as unquestioned in the temporal as in the spiritual. Their personal dignities and privileges are placed before them as the dignities and privileges of God, and if outraged common sense should say, "Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi," then common sense is heresy, and damnable, and to be crushed. You shall not speak a word, whatever they may do; you shall not lift your voice; for their honors are God's honors, they say, giving Jesus Christ the lie.

This is Romanism.

A priesthood is like fire, a good friend and servant, but a bad master. The founder of Christianity made of his priesthood a lamp: Romanism changed it to a conflagration.

This iron bond within the golden one makes of the "consecrated" class in Italy, both men and women, a body which has all the essential character of a secret society. It is a tacit Freemasonry, with no necessity for oaths or signs, which may explain their hatred of secret societies above all other evils. Only a secret society could baffle them

when they had power. Individual effort was vain, and all the earlier partial popular movements but mushrooms in their track.

Ah, this great, stupid public which stands blustering before us, with its gigantic size and bovine wit! It scarcely sees the twinkle of our rapier in the air, but blusters on with its head cut off, nor knows, till we have offered it a pinch of snuff, what meant the laugh that shook our shoulders so. Some of your most trusted leaders were our friends, my good Goliath!

But it requires courage to enter a secret society in order to betray its counsels, and courage is a virtue which neither these men nor their friends possess.

Whatever internal dissensions there may be in this body,—and their mutual jealousies, hatreds, and revenges are bitter,—they become as one when their privileges are in danger, and, either actively or passively, they punish the offender. You shall not sign the cross upon you, and sit down to eat your bread and meat, and thank God for it, rising up, but they will see some evil in the act.

A priest must inevitably be either much better or much worse than an ordinary man. He cannot be on the same plane. "The curse of a priest lasts to the seventh generation," says the Italian proverb, and they fear it, not from any belief in his supernatural virtue, but from a conviction of his implacable malignity.

Of course there are good men and women among them, but these are passive. They speak sometimes, and often saying all that we have said, and more, but in a whisper. They have no living Christian courage. If the fear of personal loss does not prevent their charitable act or honest speech, the fear of "giving scandal" does. (In papal Rome the one who "gives scandal" is less the one who commits the crime than the one who exposes it.) This most convenient plea of scandal is like charity, it covers a multitude of sins. In fact, they seem to be unanimous, and you might think in all this silence that the real Christian Church in Italy were dead, but that, like Father Segneri and dear Father Ventura, from time to time

some heart, indignant, breaks, To show that still she lives.

From these few courageous ones and from the sorrowfully silent the

grades descend through every variety to such men as no Protestant church would tolerate for a day in its pulpit.

They could not burn Father Segneri alive, they could not even imprison him, in these low, atheistical, democratic times; but what they could, that they did. And they were logical; for he had menaced that which was most dear to them, their usurped privileges.

The Madonna and her Child did not disturb them. The humble Mother with her downcast eyes was silent. The Divine Babe, with his pink little hand upraised to bless the beholder, or to touch St. Joseph's lilies, or to caress his mother's cheek, was as unreproving as any babe in the world. Neither did they fear the sorrowful Mother, for the swords were all sheathed in her heart, nor the Crowned-withthorns, with his mute lips of passion. These were all silent.

But this Christ between the cradle and the cross,—this preaching, teaching, promising, denouncing Christ, with his "Woe to the rich!" and Dives in hell and Lazarus in paradise, his "My kingdom is not of this world," "The servant is not above his master;" this Christ driving the money-changers out of the temple,—why, if he had appeared in Rome but a few centuries ago, preaching as he preached in Jerusalem, they would have burned him alive, as they did Arnaldo da Brescia and Savonarola; and if he should so appear to-day, they would condemn him in all their congregations, and pursue him as with vipers.

He might, indeed, say one word between the two silences: " Tu es Petrus;" but no more.

Go to! if you want a spur to your devotion, here is a wooden Madonna, much the worse for wear, but all the more devotional for that, maybe. She has winked, or she has whispered, a message to some one. She is so poor, this queen of heaven! and she wants money. And here is another miraculous image asking for a church or chapel. Money! money! And here another in the fields has raised her hand to bless. You surely could not leave her penniless and without shelter! She feels the tramontana, does this holy queen of angels, all whose wings are not enough to shelter her, and the rain, moreover, is washing her paint off. Money! money! money! There will be so many indulgences and so many masses for those who give so much money, "fixed prices," and no monopoly of beads-, crucifix-, or medalselling.

O scourge of Christ!

Aaron was heard when he moved through the cloud by a golden tinkling of bells and pomegranates round his steps; but these later marvels rattle with a noise of coppers as they proclaim the grace of God, "going, going, gone" to the highest bidder!

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."

Who opens in Rome?

Father Segneri tried to open, and got his fingers badly pinched in the rusty lock.

All this passed through Glenlyon's mind, and it made him sick. He scarcely went out into the town any more. He remained alone in his room all day, meeting the ladies for a few minutes during luncheon, and appearing in the drawing-room half an hour before dinner.

He had remained so, shut into his room, this day preceding Ascension, seeing no one but Fra Antonio, who had the kindness to insist on coming to the eastle to hear his confession, knowing that he might be made to wait longer than he was able in the crowd of the church.

Assuring themselves that he would not need them, the countess and her daughter went out for one of their walks in the woodland roads, and deep, flowery paths buried between vineyards and corn-fields, where the high banks at either side were gay with flowers, blue, gold, and red.

The two loved to talk together, and to-day Aurora was full of a new life.

"I have just escaped from a dark place, mamma," she said. "I have been in cruel doubt as to what my life is coming to. If I meant to marry, I should think of what beautiful children I would rear, and what noble men and women I would make of them. But I do not mean to marry. Of course we will have our little school in the castle when we have the misfortune to lose our friend, and we will do what we can for the poor. But the thought of that did not content me. There was poetry; and I felt that I must sing or suffocate; but I want my songs to have some other than a pleasing value. It was necessary that I should do lasting good as well as please for a moment. I wanted to kill two birds with one stone. Now it is all clear to me. Of course you could have told me, and everybody else knew; nevertheless I dis-

covered it. Other people's wisdom is champagne without the sparkle; but what we find ourselves, how intoxicating it is! It is that makes us young folks so stubborn, and unwilling to profit by the experience of others, is it not, mamma? We like the new, fresh sparkle on the wisdom. Well, I found this: people like a song without trying to. It is a lasciar correre. And they follow, as soldiers follow the band. Now we will make them follow our music. Let us hold ourselves like priestesses, not making little of our gifts with using them for trifles. If some one is heroic, let us crown him. For those who are in sorrow let us strive to find the sweetness of pain. If a wrong is done, we will cry out like eagles. If some one is doing sweet, humble work, we will scatter flowers over him. So doing, all our studies will have worth. It will not be petty to polish words and phrases, to search the universe for figures; nor will it be sad to wear ourselves pale and thin, if need be, and grow old unawares, when our labor is for such an end. Above all, we must seek to awaken courage. 'Be strong, and of a good courage; 'We were not called to cowardice.' It is ever courage which conquers all that is worth conquering. Courage is the heart of everything. 'La paura l'è faita d'nen.'"

She drew a full breath, ending; then laughed a sweet, genial laugh. "Colonel d'Rubiera taught me that," she said. "He grafted his own spirit on me that day when I never moved my eyes from him, and the sun shone on us both. The sun went down as we came out to safety. It seemed to wait there on the horizon to see us safe."

The two walked onward under the olives that hung full of strings of little cream-colored blossoms. The mother waited breathlessly for the next word. Would it show the girl still thinking of her hero?

It came at last, blithe and secure: "We must be getting our crown-jewels ready, contessa mia, and our scourges, and our balsams." And, clasping her hand over her mother's arm, she hung there, proud and content.

"What a happy mother I am!" the countess sighed.

They came upon an old woman who sat on a rock and spun flax. She was very poorly dressed, but her face showed signs of fineness, and she moved her hands with a certain grace as she swung and twirled the spindle. She sat under an olive-tree, and a string of blossoms had dropped on her gray hair, and hung there. A black pig was

tethered to her girdle by a long red cord, and went about eating the grass and herbs within reach. When all was eaten, the beast would come to the woman's knee to indicate the fact, and would then move on to new pastures.

In contrast with this woman's poverty of dress and countenance were a string of gold beads which hung about her neck, and a pair of large pear-shaped pearls in her ears. The countess, pausing, remarked upon them.

"They are all that is left of my portion," the woman said, dropping the rocca into her lap and looking up with a sad smile on her withered face. "They were a part of my mother's portion. When I am in want I sell a bead. What are left when I die will pay for my funeral and for masses. It is all arranged with Fra Antonio. I never sell a bead, but I go and tell him, and he sets it down. If any one should rob me when I die, he would know."

"You must have been rich once," the countess said to her.

The reply was a stenographical sign of face and hands which plainly said that she had been very well off, but scarcely very, very rich.

"But my mother was rich," she added, nodding her head up and down, and opening her eyes very wide to express wonder at such "Her father was a rich farmer, and she married another. Her portion was three thousand golden scudi in a satin bag embroidered with gold and silver threads, and these ear-rings, and a coral set, and gold beads, string after string, from her throat to her waist, and more rings than you could put on your hands at one time, and a silk brocade dress shot through with gold and silver; and when she went home from the church, there stood before her husband's door six yoke of great white oxen hung with red cord and fringes and tassels, and with gold galloon wound about their long, sharp horns. horns like that"-curving upward her long, slender arms. "I brought my husband only one yoke of oxen and a hundred scudi," she said, with a faint sigh, taking up her distaff again. "I had these pearls and half of the beads, and the brocade dress. I sold the dress when my husband died, and there was made a set of altar vestments of it."

The pig came to announce that there was no more clover within

reach of his tether. The two ladies said a few kind words to the woman, and went on.

They reached that part of the Serpentino which was under the castle. Here there was a cabin in which lived an old man and woman who made money by selling blinded song-birds. Against the steep rock beside their house hung a score of tiny white cages, each with a bird in it. The man was preparing to put their eyes out with a hot iron. Perhaps he had already blinded some.

Some ladies utter a word of careless pity, maybe, when they see these blinded singers; but do they refuse to buy them? If they would but pause a moment to reflect on the hideous cruelty of the thing, they would refuse.

To stop with a human heart and look at these little victims was to have the heart-ache. Some drooped motionless on the perch. One was going in a ceaseless dizzy round from one perch to the other, its head hung low. This one may have been already blind, and trying to find out what the darkness meant, when it could feel the sun and air.

One stood on its perch, and sung as though its heart would break. It did not cease for more than a moment at a time. They had heard it as they came through the olives, and now, as they stood looking, the little creature filled up every pause with anxious, palpitating music.

"If I were blind, could I sing better?" so it seemed to say. "I will sing forever if you will not put my eyes out. I have little ones who wait for me, and I can hear my mate scream from the tree-tops and the air. My companions are flying home to their nests. I see their wings twinkling small and dark against the sunset. But I will sing, if you will spare my eyes!"

"Mamma, I cannot bear it!" Aurora exclaimed. "I would free every one of them if I could. I must buy this singer, and I can save the money in some way."

She went to the man, who stood with a complacent face to serve her, and, turning with loathing half away from him, bought the singer, and then hurried away, holding the little cage to her neck and cheek, and whispering comfort to its inmate, now grown silent.

The countess stopped before the man. "How can you do it?" she exclaimed.

He looked at her with a shrewd smile, and, holding up his right hand, rubbed the forefinger and thumb together,—pantomime signifying "money!"

- "But one should not be cruel, even for money," she persisted.
- "Rich folks buy them," he said. "That lot, now, is worth a hundred lire."

She could say nothing. How can the poor be expected to sacrifice their bread to a principle to which the rich will not sacrifice a caprice?

"Bisogna magnar," added the man, with his strong nasal accent.

She made no reply, but, buying one of the birds, followed her daughter. She would have been ashamed to join Aurora without having made her little sacrifice to mercy, though she was not rich, and years had taught her more of that selfishness which some call prudence.

The incident had depressed them both. It was such as makes us pause sometimes and doubt if the hell we think so distant may not be present all about us on the earth, with human beings for demons. There seems no unlikelihood in the supposition, when we mark the unresponsive glance that passes by appealing eyes and hands, the smile of satisfaction when a falsehood strikes, and hear trite complacent maxims of prudence coldly uttered in reply to cries of agony.

The two women went up to the terrace, opened their cages, and smiled again when they saw the little captives take their first incredulous step toward freedom, as if fearing a new snare, then spread their wings with a silken snap and shoot away into the wide blue air.

"Heavenly Father, here are your birds!" said Aurora.

They went down. Glenlyon had not yet appeared. The countess seated herself with some fancy-work to await him. Aurora went to see if the dinner-table were well prepared and the dessert pretty. There were strawberries. She looked them over, then poured wine on them, shook them about in it, poured the wine off again, and sprinkled them with sugar. Then she returned to the drawing-room, and found Glenlyon with her mother.

"È riverita!" she said, with a little courtesy, brushing the brighttiled floor. "Does the signore know that there are two happy creatures in Sassovivo to-day?"

- "I hope so," he replied, looking from one smiling face to the other.
- "But they are birds," the mother interposed.
- "I know they are," he answered, with a smile.

Then they told him their story.

"This ought to be brought before the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals," Glenlyon said, becoming grave.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"Et tous croyaient couvert des ténèbres de l'âge L'esprit qui voyait l'avenir."—La Vendée.

THERE was music that evening at the sindaco's, and the two ladies went. Glenlyon never left the house after dark, but insisted on their going, saying that he would employ the time in writing a letter to Aurelia. He did not tell them that he felt ill, that a faintness and somnolence which had sometimes of late crept over him even while he was speaking had touched him more than once that day with a sudden stillness and a sense of sinking.

They went, and he wrote and sealed his letter. Then he began to walk the long room to and fro, thinking,—studying over the only subject which could now for any length of time employ his mind. His heart, ever devoted to his kind, uprose with a passionate longing to see some harmony and justice in their lives. He saw one-half of mankind so wretched that it can hardly support existence, while hundreds of thousands, living upon them, roll, laughing, in their coaches downward to perdition. Those who have enough think that all is well, and are merciless; those who have nothing find that all is ill, and live but to hate. The well-fed preach patience to the starving, the highly-placed contentment with their lot to the neglected and obscure; the down-trodden mutter anarchy with their mouths half full of dust.

It was the weary old story, and the remedy too was an old story,—that remedy which, when first announced, kindled the hearts of believers with heavenly courage and delight and raised them to the rank of heroes. There was found the key-note that harmonized

all!—there, simple and sublime, the spiritual solution of all earth's problems!

Oh, who would restore Christianity to the world? From whence should come that new spiritual fire which would have power to break up the crust which has settled on the souls of men, and overwhelm with a rush of larger aspiration the trivial tyrannies which make life all a surface,—destroying them, not with violence, but with an absolute forgetfulness? Whose would be the mission to enthrone justice in the seat of privilege, give to the teacher his rightful authority, and to the taught their equal right to say at need, "Physician, heal thyself"?

The mental feeling of being shut in, darkened and baffled, communicating itself to his senses, Glenlyon found the room too small and stifled, and, opening a window, he stepped out into a balcony and looked abroad over the campagna. He was surprised to find a lamp burning outside the window. In the few houses visible to him other lights were set out, and all the campagna twinkled with firefly lamps across the leafy vines and through the elms and olives. Farther off they burned goldenly amid the deep-blue haze of distant hills.

He recollected that on the eve of Ascension-day the people put out lamps full of olive-oil to light the angel who should come that night and put the grain into the empty wheat-heads. Some set their lamps out frankly, some with a shamefaced secrecy; some few, discerning underneath the figure of the myth the consecration of bread in the Eucharist, set their lamps with reverence, giving thanks.

Glenlyon took comfort, as he often did, from these religious fancies of his native land, and, wrapping a cloak about him, went out unseen and up to the terrace.

It was a silent, dewy night, and the sky was white with stars as they come crowding out sometimes when rain is near, and all round about, set dark against the scintillating heavens, was a ring of mountains.

To see the whole horizon gives a sense of limitation; and this dark-circling rampart pressed upon Glenlyon's heart. Going to an arm-chair that was set there facing the south, he seated himself, only the sky visible to him above the parapet, and looked up at the Galaxy that faltered across the sparkling stars as white and seeming light as

scattered swans'-down. How tender and fresh, like dew, was all that heavenly fire!

The hours wore on deep into the cool night. The sounds of human life ceased, one by one. A white mist gathered over the plain, grew deeper, and filled it like a sea, spreading a thin veil over the heights even. On one of the mountain-tops the mist grew luminous, and the moon came up quivering with brilliancy like a flame in the unsteady air.

Glenlyon had forgotten where he was. A quiet coldness had crept over him as he sat there thinking, and once something flashed through him like silent summer lightning through a cloud. It made him start with a momentary physical alarm which did not touch his mind. Then a heaviness succeeded, and his thoughts grew indistinct and were lost in a light sleep.

There is a silence of deep night through which, if you listen all alone, you may hear at times a sobbing, lamentable sigh, widely pervading, as if the earth were sentient and breathed out that long weary respiration through her patient suffering of some immemorial penitence. This tremulous wave of air arose, and swelled, and died away about Glenlyon as he slept; and, as it touched him, he dreamed that some one spoke, or sang mournfully,—

"A voice is heard in Ramah, Lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, And will not be comforted."

It was something far from his thought, though not discordant with it. "What!" he said, still dreaming, "does she weep yet? The Prophet heard her when he foretold the captivity of Babylon, and the Apostle heard her when the Innocents were sacrificed. Does she still lament from Ramah, the mystical mother of Israel?"

As if in answer to him, still more clearly came the lament again, in tones that had no home, it seemed, in heaven or on earth.

"Why should she not weep," he said then, "if her soul yet lives? Her children go bleeding about the world, everywhere rejected. And what a race they were! All that we know of spiritual wisdom came from them, and they are second in no one thing which makes the glory of a nation. They are pre-eminent in sorrow, too. What other

people was ever lashed about the world for centuries, as by the hand of an avenging angel, which still does not destroy? What other people can hold up its prophecies fulfilled in history? What other people ever was, like this, the living fulfilment of a prophecy before the eyes of the world?

"Does any of the old spirit live in them yet? Yes; for they endure. Have they yet a future, and a mission to perform upon the earth? Yes, for they are persecuted. Where the flail beats, there is grain."

Again, a third time, the voice was heard repeating with a-mournful persistence,—

"A voice is heard in Ramah,
Lamentation, and bitter weeping,
Rachel weeping for her children,
And will not be comforted."

It seemed to Glenlyon that the complaint was meant for him to hear, and, moved with pity, he raised his arms, and gave the prophet's answer to that cry:

"Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears;

For there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord,
That thy children shall come again to their own border."

His own voice roused him, but he seemed to wake in another world than any he had known. The sky with all its stars looked him in the face with something awful and significant in their burning gaze. The supernatural seemed close at hand, piercing the material with its holy rays. He rose, and began to walk the terrace again, quietly, but with a sense of exaltation.

"Yes," he said aloud, "it is they who shall come to the rescue of Christianity. Who else could it be? What else is worthy of their past? What else can assure their future? When the time is full, they will believe. They will come and take their place as leaders, divinely called, not answering the gentiles, and they will be the apostles of a renewed faith. There will be no more vain struggles of isolated men and women to purify the streams which flow from an impure source. Reform must come from the head."

Glenlyon, walking still, but with an uneven step, felt a second time that silent lightning flash through him and circle for a dizzy instant round his head. And again a blank moment, and a heavy sense of sleepiness. But his mind held with a tenacious grasp his one surviving thought, and carried it into that sleep which was half a trance, where it became again a dream, and a voice that spoke:

"We have suffered all that was foretold. Our glory flew away from us like a bird, Mount Ebal with its curses fell upon us, and we have been stoned in the valley of Achor. Mockery and outrage and blood and fire have pursued us. We were hungry and dreamed that we ate, and, when we waked, our souls were empty; we were thirsty and drank in our dreams, and, waking, we fainted. And everywhere we looked upon His image, and we thought that He mocked us. Not so. He said, 'While you suffer, I hang upon the cross. And I will not come down till Israel come and draw the nails from my hands and feet, and the thorns from my head.'"

A pause; then the voice spoke again:

"What would you more than me? Your prophets and leaders, are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? I also. Are they children of Abraham? Even so am I. And I am more: I am the head of the Christian Church, and I have taken the golden candlestick out of the mud of Tiber, and it shall light the altar of the risen Lord in Sion!

"O house of Jacob, come ye,
And let us walk in the light of the Lord.

"We have Moses and the prophets, and One is risen from the dead. The era of the Crucified is ended, and the era of the risen Lord begun!" Glenlyon tried to speak, and the effort waked him.

A faint glimmer of dawn shone over the eastern mountains. A few large stars burned steadily. The moon hung dazzling in the south. He rose, went to the parapet, and knelt there, his face toward the coming day. The silence round him was like the silence which surrounds a bell when it has just ceased ringing. What he had heard and thought was to him a vision and a solution. The mystic lotos-flower that symbolizes time afloat upon eternity had stirred before him, and he had caught a glimpse of golden peace hidden within the folded centuries.

The day grew over Italy. There was an aurora of rose-color over the pale-blue west, an aurora of silver over the dark northern cliffs; a background of red gold behind the lapis-lazuli of the southwestern mountains, and soft opal hues touching the deep mists that filled the valley. Like angels floating in a ring about the throne of God, their wings and locks and garments intermingling, while one swift rapture whirling through them whirls their spirits into one, so all the circling glories of the rising day melted into each other round the skies—as Glenlyon's soul went out into eternity.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

PROSIT.

FIVE years have passed since that morning when Aurora and her mother, trembling and hand in hand, after having searched the house in vain to find Glenlyon, went up the terrace-stairs and found him kneeling there with his arms stretched out upon the parapet and the sun shining in his lifeless face.

They have been full and happy years. To work as best they can and love to work is all they ask of life, and their work has met with admiring recognition. That, according to their small means, they are a providence to the poor and ignorant about them is not their only merit. From their beautiful retirement, which is never solitude, a light shines out, and now and then a song is heard. The song is nearly always from Aurora, now one of the first poets of Italy, and a scholar. The mother hushes herself before this young nightingale. "I am but a sparrow," she says; "and, besides, you express me better than I can express myself."

It is her delight to bring all the riches of her talents and experience to be glorified by the youthful enthusiasm of her daughter's fresher nature, and Aurora owes to her much of the mature thought and more chastened style for which she is praised.

The Cagliostro come no more to their villa in Sassovivo. The

duchess not only will not see the place, she will not hear it named; for Don Leopoldo survived but a year the effects of his concluding adventure there. He left a son, a frail, sickly child, which became at once the supreme interest and occupation of both the mother and the widow. Their confidential dependants were sifted to find the most trusty servants for the infant, the chamber where he slept could only be entered through that of his mother or the duchess, every precaution surrounded him. If his breath quickened, they held their own breath; if he looked feverish, they hung over him in terror; if he cricd, they ran to see what ailed him; if he lay too silent in his sleep, they stole with palpitating hearts to look at him.

"My dear, you are tormenting yourself needlessly," the duke said to his wife. "Come away with me for a little while, and leave the child to his mother. She will not neglect him. And you are looking feverish."

He was very kind to her, and alarmed for her.

"I cannot stay where I shall not see him every day," she said, leaning somewhat wearily on her husband's arm. "That woman has two boys, two healthy boys. Think of it, Marcantonio! And Léopoldino is as frail as a feather."

"Don't think of her!" the husband urged.

She raised herself suddenly. "Not think of her? She is forever before my eyes with her insolent smile. You know she came to Rome last year to brave me. She drove out knowing where she could meet me face to face with her two great rosy-cheeked boys in her own carriage. And at the opera that same night she had the box next mine, and I saw her smile and sit picking the pearls off the coronet on her fan, stuck half her arm's length out of the box, and she set a tiny leaf of her bouquet in place of them. Marcantonio, I would be almost willing to die that you might marry again and have an heir, if this one should fail!"

While they were spending their autumn in a castle by the sea, Aurelia McLellan came out to spend a week with her friends in Sassovivo and enjoy the gay vintage-time, a yearly custom since her marriage. But this was to be her last visit, for her husband's five years in Italy were ended, and they were about returning to England. Robert was now in Rome, preparing for their removal.

Down in the terrace-gardens below the castle men and women were

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gathering in the grapes from the heavily laden vines, and the countess, a red silk handkerchief tied on turban-wise over her black hair, was overlooking them. A small motionless cloud hid the sun as a fan hides a lady's face.

Aurelia's daughter, a pretty girl of four years, darted about among the vines, intent on a private vintage of her own. There were splashes of purple juice all over her white apron, her white little fingers were violet-tipped, her dainty nose and chin were each marked with the Bacchic stain, and a long sunny curl that would drop forward was dyed at the end a rich garnet. The countess had plaited her a hat of vine-leaves to shade her from the sun, and from under the points and curves her blue-gray eyes looked out dilated and entranced with the wondrous richness and liberty of her entertainment. Aladdin's garden of jewels would not have seemed to her so beautiful. For, besides what she had, there was much just out of reach to wish for and delight her imagination with,-figs, small and golden, and others large and black which seemed to be on the point of melting off their It seemed to the child that if she should stand beneath the branch and, looking upward, suck very hard, one might come down. But her mother had forbidden her the figs, and her mother's law was a thing of adamant to her. And there were prunes, white and black, and as large as eggs, and green lemons just beginning to yellow, and still greener mandarini, looking like balls of serpentine without the spots. It was all deliciously tempting; but before she should go to bed that night her mother would say to her, "Has my daughter done anything to-day which she ought not to have done, and which I do not know?" and confession would be inevitable. A lie was an unknown thing in Casa McLellan.

Aurora and Aurelia were in the drawing-room, softly talking over the events of the years they had known together; and while they talked the mother strung loop to loop of a net for her daughter's hair, and her friend wrought a bunch of violets, dark and pale blue, in the corner of a silken cerulean scarf for the neck of a superb two-year-old boy, whose brown curls were visible on the pillow of a cradle in the next room.

This room, which had been Glenlyon's study, was now Aurora's. The walls all round were many-colored with books, from yellow-white

old parchment and brown corded bindings of the fifteenth century, with their crowded text, quaintly-curtailed words, and manuscript look, all telling of labor and deliberation, to bright new pamphlets, and elegant modern bindings glittering with threads of gold and color on the fresh cream-tinted parchment of to-day. The languages of the East were giving up their honey to the student who declared that all she wished to know she learned in learning languages, and the "suave Scio" and "strong Falerno" of Greek and Latin foamed in her cup.

An odor of violets pervaded the room from drawers, caskets, and vases into which she crowded them in blue and fragrant heaps every spring. There was only one other peculiarly feminine sign. A little work-table of olive-wood held the silk, mesh, and needle from which the netted foundation of a veil was slowly growing, to be as slowly embroidered, month after month, a few stitches added every day with an accompanying murmur of some lesson conned from an open book propped up before the worker.

"Well," Aurelia said, with a faint sigh, concluding their reminiscences, "I shall always remember my six years in Italy. Here I have known my greatest sorrow and my most perfect happiness. And it has all been like a series of pictures."

She kept on working, and her voice was steady while she spoke, though a soft melancholy overshadowed her face.

Aurora held her work suspended for a moment, her eyes swimming in tears while she listened, then went on stitching as she replied, emulating her friend's composure, "Your coming here has been the great joy of our lives, and your sorrow has been our sorrow. These years will be treasured as the most sacred recollections, and our most longing hope, will be that of seeing you again."

"Of course we must see each other, dear—" Aurelia began, then stopped; for a murmur came from the next room, and the cradle began to rock.

The young mother dropped her work, and stole on tiptoe to hush her Angelo to sleep again. Aurora looked after her, and watched her kneeling there by the cradle, rocking it, and murmuring like a dove. She had but scant admiration for marriage, holding a true and voluntary single life to be the higher state; and as for love, no one dared to more than hint an offer of it, and that not a second time; but she

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found Aurelia beautiful as wife and mother. No sly sentimentalities or flirtations ever tainted the perfect union of Robert McLellan and his wife, no possibility of any outside attraction other than the most loyal and transparent friendship ever entered the mind of either. Peace, confidence, and a mutual respect the most perfect brooded over their household.

"Two persons both kind and true," Aurora thought, "with the same standard of honesty in all things for both, with knowledge and means to bring their children up, everything but science taught them at home, and no delegation of their souls' training to others,—these conditions make marriage respectable." She paused, still looking at Aurelia, who, still kneeling, had lifted her head from the pillow of her child, and, softly moving the cradle, gazed at its sleeping face with something of angelic seriousness in her own, seeing there, not its rich tumbled curls alone, its rosy mouth and rounded arms and dimpled cheek, but an immortal creature to which she had given the life of earth with all its possibilities and perils and never-ending consequences. "Such a marriage is indeed a sacrament," thought Aurora.

Gian, unchanged by the years which had passed over his head, that seemed to have ducked and avoided them, appeared with the afternoon mail, holding up triumphantly both hands full, and, checked by an uplifted finger, came tiptoeing grotesquely across the room, working his mouth with the effort to make no noise, and smiling and nodding intelligently toward the inner door. Aurelia's children were the idols of these good-natured souls.

Aurora looked over the mail, selected her own, and smiled at Robert McLellan's daily dispatch. There was a letter for her mother bearing the coronet and monogram of the duchess, but the writing did not seem to be hers. Aurora took it to the window, called softly, held the letter up, then dropped it down into the stained apron which Aurelia's daughter ran to hold out under the window.

Aurelia came out and took her husband's letter, bending a smiling face over the three closely-written sheets. Aurora sat thinking, as she worked, of one of the magazines unopened beside her. Somewhere in it, in an honorable place, most certainly, was her latest poem; and she was equally sure that a chorus of praises would follow the reading of it through Italy. God bless her own Italians, how they praised her!

They knew she could not sing with a sure voice unless they did. How could the poets ever raise their voices in those hard, cold lands where frequently a criticism was the only response, instead of this glad hand-clapping and buzzing hive of "Bis, bis!" let loose into the air!

A quick step on the stair interrupted her revery, and her mother appeared with an agitated face, an open letter in her hand.

Aurora hastened to her in alarm: "Mamma, what has happened?"

"That poor duchess! Read, child!" And the countess burst into tears in giving her the letter.

The writing was almost illegible.

"Come to me at once, Emilia, or I shall go mad! The boy! the boy! There is no hope! Come quickly, and tell no one."

The poor duchess, indeed! With the failing of that fragile life a fatal blow was struck both at her pride and her affection. Besides, nursed in the old traditions, and fed by servility and flattery, she really thought it a public loss and calamity that the male line of the Cagliostro should fail.

"I must go at once," the countess said, wiping her eyes. "Dear Aurelia, will you be so kind as to tell Gian to go for a carriage? I can catch the six-o'clock train, if I make haste. And, Aurora mia, put some things up for me, and help me to dress. I can think of nothing."

All was quickly prepared, and the two young ladies accompanied the countess to the station, and stood on the platform beside her carriage-window, Gian erect behind them, as solemn as a watchful terrier, till the train moved away, and lingering yet a moment to answer with their handkerchiefs a fluttering signal from the car-window, and Aurora turning once again to send a tearful kiss from her white hand. "Poor mamma!"

As they drove home through the twilight, Aurelia was so unusually grave and silent that her friend at length took notice of it.

"I was thinking," she said, "that, in telling you to-day that Italy has seen my greatest joy and sorrow, I should have added, and my first remorse. If I had from the first decidedly rejected the approaches of that man whom I knew to be in honor bound to another, all this trouble might have been avoided. I sometimes think that

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more evil in the world results from the vanity of women than from any other cause."

Aurora tried to reassure her. "You remind me," she said, smilingly, "of a gentleman who said to mamma that he thought that all the evil and all the good done in the world was done by women. But indeed, dearest," she added more seriously, "remorse is too strong an expiation for a fault so indeliberate, committed in a cloud of delusions, and so promptly corrected. I do not know any one who has such a stern clear sense of right and wrong as you have. Mamma has often said that if all ladies of position had your principles, society would soon become an influence for good in the world."

They said no more, and, when they reached home, Aurelia went to her children, and Aurora to put her own room in order after the hasty preparations for her mother's journey. Having laid everything that was out of place carefully aside, and straightened all that was awry, she trimmed the lamp that burned before her Madonna and crucifix, repeating as she set it in the niche the prayer so many times repeated that it came to her lips almost unconsciously: "The first time that the life he risked for me shall be in peril, may some swift help be sent him for my sake!"

But, as she ended, a new thought sent an electric spark through her, and fixed her there like a statue. Colonel d'Rubiera would be the next Duke of Cagliostro, the villa one of his homes, and they his tenants! The subject had never been mentioned before her, and of the duchess's fears and hatreds she was ignorant.

Absorbed in this new view of their situation, it was some time before she took note of a sound which might have been a rose-bud beaten against her door. Opening presently, she was confronted by the little Angelo, who stood there erect but trembling, a large-eyed serious cherub of a boy. His mother had been teaching him to go and tell Aurora that dinner was served, and she now stood smiling in the distance to see how he would acquit himself. It was a test both of his courage and of his obedience, for he was as yet but slightly acquainted with this lady and stood somewhat in awe of her.

With breathless care, then, changing his r's to w's or v's, but otherwise perfect, he announced, syllable by syllable, "La Con-tes-si-na A-wo-wa è sev-vi-ta!"

She thanked him with great politioness, kissed him with ardor, and led him in triumph to his mother. "Dear Aurelia, your children are beautifully brought up," she said. "Glenlyon always said they would be."

"I try to do my duty," the mother replied quietly; but her soft eyes grew humid for a moment.

The children dined at noon, and had their supper while the ladies were at dinner; and it had become a custom for Jenny to lead them in their night-gowns to the dining-room to say good-night and be accompanied to their room by their mother, who heard them say their prayers there.

As Aurora rose from the table she heard the sound of their little sandals scuffing along the passage, and, turning to greet the small white-robed figures, saw Angelo standing in the door breathlessly staring at her, full of a new lesson which Jenny had just taught him,—the somewhat erudite salutation that one hears everywhere in provincial Italy on going to table or on rising from it.

- "Well?" said Aurora, encouragingly.
- " Pwosit!" said the child.

The word had scarcely left his baby mouth when, with a sweet cry, she caught him up, and extinguished his beaming eyes and blushing face in her soft neck.

Friendly reader of my story, Prosit!

FINIS.

